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HEMLOCK

A TALE OF THE WAR OF 1812.



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HEMLOCK

A TALE OF THE WAR OF 1812

BY

ROBERT SELLAR

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HEMLOCK.

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HEMLOCK.

CHAPTER I.

THE rain of the forenoon had been followed by an outburst of heat and the sunshine beat with fierce intensity on the narrow square that formed the yard of the barracks at Montreal. There was a milkiness in the atmosphere which, conjoined with the low bank of black cloud that hung over the St Lawrence where it rolled out of sight, indicated a renewal of the downpour. The yard was deserted. Dinner was over and the men lounged and snoozed indoors until the sun abated his fervor, always excepting the sentry, who stood in the shade of the gateway, his gaze alternately wandering from the refreshing motion of the blue waters of St Mary's current to the cluster of log houses, interspersed by stone edifices with high tin roofs, which formed the Montreal of 1813. Presently the sound of hoofs was heard, and there came galloping to the gate an orderly from the general's headquarters. Passing the sentry, he

pulled up at the door of that portion of the barracks where the officer of the day was quartered, and who, in another minute, was reading the despatch he had brought. It was an order for a detachment of 20 men to report without delay at headquarters. Instantly the voice of a sergeant was heard shouting the order to those who had to turn out and the barracks became a bustling scene of soldiers rubbing their accoutrements and packing their kits. In half an hour they had fallen into rank and marched to the general's residence. The lieutenant in charge went in to report and found General de Watteville writing.

"You ready for the route? Ah, yes; very good, Morton. I will write you one order. You will escort an ammunition-train to camp La Fourche and there go under command of Major Stovin."

"I hope, General, there is a prospect of our helping to use the cartridges when we get there?"

"I cannot say. Yankee very cautious; put his nose one, two, three time across the frontier and then run back, like rat to his hole. Maybe Hampton come; we must be ready. Here is your order. You will find the train at King's Posts and use all expedition."

Saluting the General, Morton withdrew and, re-joining his men, they marched down the narrow and crooked maze of St Paul street, attracting little attention, for the sight of soldiers had become familiar even to the habitant wives, who were

jogging homeward in their market-carts. By the time the town was cleared, and the Lachine road gained, the sun was inclining to the west, and his rays being more endurable, the men stepped out briskly, bandying coarse jests, while the officer, some paces behind, eyed with surprised delight the foaming rapids, which he now saw for the first time. The afternoon was calm, which made the spectacle of a wide expanse of water tossed into huge billows without apparent cause, all the more singular. "Why," said Morton inwardly, "all the rivers of the United Kingdom, with their falls and cataracts, if added to this vast river, would not perceptibly add either to its volume or its tumult."

At the head of the rapids, where the St Lawrence expands into the lake named St Louis, stood the King's Posts, an extensive collection of buildings, with wharves in front, at which were moored a large number of boats. King's Posts was the depot of supplies for the country west of Montreal, and therefore a place of bustle in time of war, boats stemming the rapids and long trains of carts conveying to its storehouses daily the supplies brought by shipping from England to Montreal, to be in turn sent off as required to the numerous garrisons along the upper St Lawrence and lakes Ontario and Erie, while the troops, then being hurried to the front, here embarked. Reporting his command, Morton was informed the boat with the supplies he was to guard would not be ready to sail until

late in the evening, and quarters were assigned his men and to himself an invitation to join the mess-dinner. Thus relieved, he strolled to the water's edge, and watched the shouting boatmen and the swearing soldiers as they loaded the flotilla that was in preparation, and was fortunate enough to see a bateau arrive from Montreal, poled up against the current by part of its crew while the others tugged at a tow-rope, reinforced by a yoke of oxen. Then he watched the sun, which, as it neared the horizon, dyed the waters of the majestic river with many hues. Slowly it neared the thick battalion of pines behind which it would disappear, and as Morton noted the broad crimson pathway that it seemed to stretch across the placid lake as a temptation to follow it into its chamber of glory, he thought he never beheld anything more imposing. Slowly the throbbing orb descended and was lost to sight, and, as if evoked by angel-spell, cloudlets became revealed and were transformed into plumage of scarlet and gold. The train of Morton's reverie was snapped by the tread of troops behind him. Turning he saw a file of soldiers with a manacled man between them. When they reached the head of the wharf, the order to halt was given. Morton knew what it meant. The tall thin man in his shirt-sleeves was a spy and he was going to be shot. It was supper-time and boats and wharfs were for the time no longer the scene of activity, but the grimy bateau-men paused

in their cookery, to watch the tragedy about to be enacted. Two soldiers lifted from their shoulders the rough box that was to be his coffin, and the doomed man stood beside it. Behind him was the St Lawrence, a lake of molten glass; in front the line of soldiers who were to shoot him. There was no hurry or confusion; everything being done in a calm and business-like manner. The prisoner stood undauntedly before his executioners; a man with a sinister countenance, in which low cunning was mixed with imperturable self-possession. He waved the bugler away when he approached to tie a handkerchief over his eyes. "Guess I want ter hev the use o' my eyes as long as I ken; but say, kurnel, moughtn't you loose my arms. It's the last wish of a dyin man." The officer gave a sign with his hand, and the rope was untied. "Prisoner, are you ready?"

"Yes, kurnel."

Turning to the firing party, the officer gave the successive orders—make ready,—present,—fire! Hardly had the last word been uttered, than the prisoner, with surprising agility, gave a backward leap into the river, and the volley swept over where he stood, the bullets ricochetting on the surface of the river behind. "The Yankee scoundrel! Has he escaped? Ten pounds for him alive or dead!" shouted the officer. There was a rush to the edge of the wharf, and the soldiers fired at random amid its posts, but the American was not to

be seen. "It is impossible for him to escape," the captain said to Morton, who had come to aid in the search. "He would have been hung had we had a gallows handy, and if he has escaped the bullet it is only to be drowned, for the river runs here like a mill-race and will carry him into the rapids." The soldiers jumped on the boats and scanned wharf and shore, and seeing no trace came to the conclusion that from his backward leap he had been unable to recover himself and did not rise to the surface. Satisfied the man was drowned, the soldiers were ordered back to the guard-room and the stir and hurry in getting the flotilla ready were resumed.

Soon afterwards Morton was seated at the mess-table, which was crowded, for there were detachments of two regiments on their way from Quebec, where they had landed the week before, to Upper Canada. The company was a jovial one, composed of veteran campaigners who had learned to make the most of life's pleasures when they could be snatched, and joke and story kept the table in a roar for a couple of hours, when the colonel's servant whispered something in his ear. "Comrades," he said, rising, "I am informed the boats are ready. The best of friends must part when duty calls, and the hour we have spent this evening is a pleasant oasis in our long and toilsome journey through this wilderness. We do not know what difficulties we may have to encounter, but we who braved the sun

of India and stormed the Pyrenees will not falter before the obstacles Canadian flood and forest may present, and will carry the flag of our country to victory, as we have so often done under our glorious chief, Wellington. We come to cross swords, not for conquest but to repel those invaders, who, professing to be the champions of liberty, seek to bolster the falling cause of the tyrant of Europe by endeavoring to create a diversion in his favor on this western continent. We shall drive the boasters back, or else will leave our bones to be bleached by Canadian snows; and we shall do more, we shall vindicate the independence of this vast country against the ingrates who smite, in the hour of trial, the mother that reared them, and shall preserve Canada to be the home of untold millions who will perpetuate on the banks of these great rivers and lakes the institutions and customs that have made the name of Britain renowned. Comrades, let us quit ourselves in this novel field of conflict as befits our colors, and I propose, as our parting toast, Success to the defenders of Canada, and confusion to the King's enemies."

With clank of sword and sabre each officer sprang to his feet and the toast was drank with shout and outstretched arm. Amid the outburst of enthusiasm, a broad-shouldered captain started the chorus,

"Why, soldiers, why, should we be melancholy, boys?"

Why, soldiers, why, whose business 'tis to die?"

It was taken up with vigor until the roar was deaf--

ening, and then the colonel gave the signal to dismiss. From the heated room, Morton stepped out and drew his breath at the spectacle presented. The moon, full orb, hung over the woods of La-prairie and poured a flood of light upon the rapids beneath, transforming them where shallow into long lanes of glittering network and where the huge billows tossed in endless tumult, sable and silver alternated. Above, the waters slumbered in the soft light, unconscious of the ordeal towards which they were drifting and scarcely ruffled by the light east breeze that had sprung up. Directly in front were the boats, loaded, and each having its complement of soldiers. The officers took their places among them and they cast off, until over a hundred were engaged in stemming the rapid current with aid of sail and oar. After passing between Caughnawaga and Lachine, indicated by their glancing spires, the leading boats awaited on the bosom of the lake for those that had still to overcome the river's drift. When the last laggard had arrived, the flotilla was marshalled by the naval officers who had control into three columns, some sixty yards apart, and, the oars being shipped, and sails hoisted, moved majestically for the head of the lake. Surely, thought Morton, as he eyed the imposing scene, the far-searching lake embosomed by nodding forest, "This country is worth fighting for."

The air was balmy, the motion of the boats pleasant, the moonlight scene inspiring, so that the

men forgot their fatigues, and burst into song, and chorus after chorus, joined in by the entire flotilla, broke the silence. A piper, on his way to join his regiment, broke in at intervals and the colonel ordered the fife and drum corps to strike up. The boat in which Morton sat brought up the rear, and softened by distance and that inexpressible quality which a calm stretch of water gives to music, he thought he had never heard anything finer, and he could not decide whether the singing of the men, the weird strains of the pibroch, or the martial music of the fifes and drums was to be preferred. About an hour had been spent thus, when the captain of the boat shouted to shift the sail, and putting up the helm, the little barque fell out of line and headed for an eminence on the south shore, so sharp and smooth in outline, that Morton took it to be a fortification. When their leaving was noted, the men in the long lines of boats struck up Auld Lang Syne, the fifes and drums accompanying, and when they had done, the piper succeeded. Morton listened to the strain as it came faintly from the fast receding flotilla, it was that of Lochaber no More.

As the shore was neared the boat was brought closer to the wind, and lying over somewhat deeply, the helmsman told those on the lee side to change seats. In the movement a man rubbed against Morton, and he felt that his clothes were wet. Looking sharply at him, he saw he was one of the

boat's crew, when his resemblance to the spy he had seen escape the bullets of the firing-party struck him. The more he looked the more convinced he grew that he was correct, and, improbable as it seemed, within an arm's length, almost, sat the man he saw plunge into the river and whom he, with everybody else, believed to have been swept into the deadly rapids. With all a soldier's detestation of a spy, he resolved he should not escape, yet to attempt to seize him in the boat would be to imperil all in it, for that the fellow would make a desperate struggle Morton knew. Prudently resolving to make no move until the boat neared its moorings, he slipped his hand into his breast-pocket and grasped the stock of one of his pistols.

As the boat approached the shore the sharply-cut eminence, which Morton had taken to be a fortification, resolved itself into a grassy knoll, destitute of glacis or rampart, and round the eastern extremity of which they glided into a smooth narrow channel, whose margin was fretted by the shadows cast by the trees which leant over from its banks. The sail now flapped uselessly and the order was given to get out the oars. The suspected spy rose with the other boatmen to get them into place and stood on a cross-bench as he lifted a heavy oar to its lock. It was a mere pretence. In a moment his foot was on the gunwale and he made a sudden spring towards the bank.

There was the sound of a plunge, of a few brief strokes by a strong swimmer, a movement among the bushes, and then silence. Morton was intensely excited, he drew his pistol, rose and cocking it fired at random. Turning to the captain of the boat he shouted in fury, "You villain; you have assisted in the escape of a King's prisoner." With stolid countenance the captain shifted the helm to suit the windings of the channel, and answered, "Me no spik Ingleese." Feeling he was powerless, Morton resumed his seat and in a minute or two a cluster of white-washed huts came in view and the boat drew alongside a landing-stage in front of them. Several soldiers were standing on it awaiting them, and on asking where he would find the commissariat officer, Morton was directed to one of the houses, in front of which paced a sentry. Entering he perceived it consisted of two rooms, divided by a board-partition. In the larger end was a woman, surrounded by several children, cooking at an open-fire, and in the other, the door and windows of which were open, for the evening was sultry, were four officers in dishabille, seated round a rickety table playing cards, and with a pewter-measure in the middle of it. One of them rose on seeing the stranger, while the others turned carelessly to examine him. Assuring himself he was addressing the officer of the commissariat, Morton explained his business. "Oh, that's all right; the powder-kegs must remain in the boat and in

the morning I will get carts to forward them to the front. There's an empty box, Lieutenant Morton; pull it up and join us," and hospitably handed him the pewter-measure. It contained strong rum grog, of which a mouthful sufficed Morton. Not so the others, who, in listening to what he had to tell of the news of Montreal and of the movements of the troops, emptied it, and shouted to the woman to refill it, and, at the same time, she brought in the supper, consisting of fried fish and potatoes. That disposed of, the cards were reproduced and the four were evidently bent on making a night of it. On returning from seeing how his men were quartered, Morton found that the grog and the excitement of the card-playing were telling on his companions, who were noisy and quarrelsome. Asking where he should sleep, the woman pointed to the ladder that reached to a trap in the roof, and he quietly ascended. It was merely a loft, with a small window in either gable and a few buffalo robes and blankets laid on its loose flooring. The place was so stifflingly hot that Morton knew sleep was out of the question even if there had been no noise beneath, and he seated himself by the side of one of the windows through which the wind came in puffs. The sky was now partially clouded and the growl of distant thunder was heard. Fatigue told on the young soldier and he dozed as he sat. A crash of thunder awoke him. Startled he rose and was astonished to find himself in utter dark-

ness, save for the rays that came through the chinks of the flooring from the candle beneath, where the officers were still carousing. He leant out of the window and saw that the moon had been blotted out by thick clouds. While gazing there was a flash of lightning, revealing to him a man crouched beside the window below. In the brief instant of intense light, Morton recognized the spy, and guessed he was listening to the officers, hoping to pick up information, in their drunken talk, of use to his employers. "He cheated the provost-marshal, he cheated me, but he shall not escape again," muttered Morton, who drew his pistols, got them ready, and, grasping one in each hand, leant out of the window to await the next flash that he might take aim. It came and instantly Morton fired. The unsuspecting spy yelled, jumped to his feet, and rushed to the cover of the woods. Then all was darkness. A crash of thunder, the sweep of the coming hurricane and the pelting of rain, increased the futility of attempting to follow. "I hope I've done for him," said Morton to himself, "and that like a stricken fox he will die in cover."

The pistol-shots together with the crash of the elements had put a stop to the carousal downstairs and Morton heard them disputing as to who should go up and see what had happened. "I will not go," said one with the deliberation of a stupidly drunk man. "I am an officer of the Royal Engineers and

have nothing to do with personal encounters. If you want a line of circumvallation laid down, or the plan of a mine, I am ready, but my commission says nothing about fighting with swords or pistols. I know my office and how to maintain its dignity."

"Yes, Hughes, and the integrity of your skin. I'd go myself (here he rose and tried to steady himself by holding on to the table) but I'll be jiggered if I can go up such a stair-case as that. It would take a son of a sea-cook," and with these words, losing his grip, the speaker toppled over and fell on the floor. The third officer, a mere lad, was asleep in his chair in a drunken stupor. The commissariat officer staggered to the foot of the ladder, and, after vainly attempting to ascend, shouted, "I say you there; what's all the shooting for? Are you such a greenhorn as to be firing at mosquitoes or a bull-frog. By George, when in company of gentlemen you should behave yourself. I will report you to your shuperior officer," and so he maundered on for a while, receiving no answer from Morton. Finally the woman of the house helped him to a corner, where he lay down and snored away the fumes of the liquor that had overcome him. Meanwhile the storm raged, and when it had passed away, and the moon again calmly came forth, and the frogs again raised their chorus, Morton was too sleepy to think of going to look for the body of the spy, and making as comfortable a bed as he could, he lay down and rested until late next morning.

CHAPTER II.

ON descending from his sleeping place, Morton found the woman preparing breakfast, and, looking into the adjoining room, saw that three of its inmates were still sleeping surrounded by the litter of their night's carousal. Stepping out of doors, he was surprised by the beauty of the sylvan scene. The air had the freshness and the sky the deep tender-blue that follows a thunder-storm, and the sunshine glittered on the smooth surface of the river that, in all its windings, was overhung by towering 'trees, except where small openings had been made by the settlers, from which peeped their white shanties. The eminence which had excited his curiosity the night before, he perceived to be an island, with a largish house at its base, flanked by a wind-mill. At the landing, was the bateau, with a group of men. Approaching them, he found the captain, whose bloodshot eyes alone indicated his excess of the preceding night. "Ah, Morton," he exclaimed, "you were the only wise man among us; you have your wits about you this morning. For me, I had a few hours' pleasure I now loathe

to think of and a racking headache. Come, let us have a swim and then go to breakfast."

Following him to the nook he sought, Morton told of his shot at the spy. The captain listened attentively to the story. "I hope you winged him," he said, "but he will escape. The settlers, except a few Old Countrymen, are all in sympathy with the Yankees, and will shelter and help him to get away. We cannot make a move that word is not sent to the enemy. I will warn the Indians to look out for him. Had it not been for the rain, they could trace him to his lair."

On returning to the house, they found their comrades trying to make themselves presentable and sat down to a breakfast of fried pork and sour bread, to which Morton did ample justice. The commissariat officer told him he could not start for some time, as carts were few and the rain would have filled the holes in the track called a road. He could have forwarded him more quickly by canoes, but there was a risk of wetting the powder at the rapids. It was noon before sufficient carts arrived to enable Morton to start, when a laborious journey ensued, the soldiers being called on constantly to help the undaunted ponies to drag the cart-wheels out of the holes in which they got mired. When they had gone a few miles the carts halted and the kegs were placed in boats, which conveyed them to their destination. Camp La Fourche was found to consist of a few temporary buildings, or rather

sheds, which, with the barns and shanties of the settlers near by, housed a few hundred men, of whom few were regulars. Morton's orders were to remain and time passed heavily, the only excitement being when a scout came in with reports of the movements of the American army on the frontier, which were generally exaggerated. The camp had been purposely placed at the forks of the English and Chateaugay rivers, to afford a base of operations against the invader, should he approach either by way of the town of Champlain or of Chateaugay. Morton relieved the tedium of waiting by hunting and fishing, for his proper duties were slight. At first he did not venture into the woods without a guide, but experience quickly taught one so active and keen of observation sufficient bush-lore to venture alone with his pocket-compass. The fishing, at that late season, was only tolerable, and while he enjoyed to the full the delight of skimming the glassy stretches of both rivers in a birch canoe, he preferred the more active motion and greater variety of traversing the pathless woods with his gun. He had been in camp over a week when he started for an afternoon's exploring of the woods. After an hour's tramp he struck the trail of what he believed to be a bear. Following it was such pleasant exercise of his ingenuity that he took no note of time, and he had traversed miles of swamp and ridge before prudence cried halt. The sun was

sinking fast, and to retrace his track was out of the question. He resolved to strike due north, which he knew would take him to the Chateaugay where he would find shelter for the night. The flush of the sunset was dying from the sky when he emerged from the woods on the banks of the river, which flowed dark and silent between the endless array of trees which sentinelled it on either side. Threading his way downward he, in time, came upon a clearing—a gap in the bush filled with ripening grain and tasselled corn. The shanty, a very humble one, stood at the top of the bank, with the river at its feet. Gratified at the prospect of rest, he paused before swinging himself over the rude fence. There rose in the evening air the sound of singing: it was a psalm-tune. The family were at worship. Reverently the soldier uncovered his head and listened. The psalm ended, he could hear the voice of supplication, though not the words. When Morton approached the house he saw a heavily-built man leave the door to meet him.

“Gude e’en, freen; ye’re oot late. But I see ye’re ane o’ the military and your wark caas ye at a’ hoors. Is there ony news o’ the Yankee army?”

Morton explained he had not been on duty but had got belated in hunting and craved the boon of shelter until morning, for which he would pay.

“Pay! say ye. A dog wearing the King’s colors wad be welcome to my best. You maun be new

to this country to think the poorest settler in it wad grudge to share his bite with ony passerby. Come your ways; we are richt glad to see you."

Entering the shanty Morton was astounded at the contrast between the homelike tidiness of the interior and the rudeness of the exterior, everything being neatly arranged and of spotless cleanliness. "Truly," he thought, "it is not abundance that makes comfort, but the taste and ingenuity to make the best of what we have." The glow of the log-fire in the open chimney was supplemented by the faint light afforded by a candle made from deer-fat, which showed him a tall young woman, who came forward to shake hands without the slightest embarrassment, an elderly woman, evidently the mother, who kept her seat by the fire, explaining she "wasna very weel," and two stout young men.

"Sit in by the fire, Mr Morton; there is a snell touch in the evening air that makes it no unpleasant, and Maggie will get ye something to eat. An hae ye nae news frae the lines? Does it no beat a' that thae Yankees, wha mak such pretensions to be the only folk i' the warld wha understan what liberty is, should fail in practice? What hae we done that they shud come in tae disturb us? Hae we nae richt to live doucely and quietly under our appointed ruler, that they should come into our ain country to harry and maybe kill us? Dod, they are a bonny lot! In the name o' freedom drawing

the sword to help the oppressor of Europe and the slaughterer of thousands of God's children by creation, if no by adoption."

"We have the comfort," replied Morton, "that they have not got Canada yet."

"An never will," replied the settler, "there's no an Auld Countryman on the Chateaugay wha wad na sooner tint life an a' than gie up his independence. My sons an mysel are enrolled in Captain Ogilvie's company and mair Yankees than they count on will hansel it's ground afore they win oor puir biggin."

"Dinna speak sae, gudeman," said his wife, "tho' the Lord may chastise he will not deliver us to the oppressor, but, as with the Assyrian, will cause him, gin he come doon on us, to hear a rumor that shall make him to return to his own land. We are but a feeble folk here by the river-side, but He winna fail them wha trust Him."

Maggie here beckoned the young officer to draw to the table, and the bread and milk tasted all the sweeter to him that they had been spread by so winsome a damsel. After supper Morton was glad to fall in with the family's custom of going early to bed, and accompanying the lads, whom he found to be frank, hearty fellows, to the outbuilding, slept comfortably alongside them on top of the fragrant fodder. At daylight they were astir, when their guest joined them in their labors, until a shout from Maggie told of breakfast being ready. Seen

by daylight the favorable impression made upon Morton the previous evening was deepened, and he did not know which most to admire, her tact which never placed her at a disadvantage or the deftness with which she discharged her household duties. Reluctantly he left, accepting readily the invitation to revisit them. In a couple of hours he was in camp and reported himself.

The acquaintance thus accidentally formed was cultivated by Morton, and few evenings passed that his canoe did not end its journey at the foot of the bank whence the settler's shanty overlooked the Chateaugay. The more he knew of the family the more he was attracted, and before long he was on familiar terms with all its members. The inaction of camp-life in the backwoods ceased to be wearisome and there was a glow and a joyousness in his days which he had never before known. So it came, that when, one afternoon, the orderly-sergeant notified him the officer in command desired to see him, the prospect of being sent away caused him a pang of vexation. His orders were to be ready to start at daylight for the frontier with despatches for the Indian guard and to collect what information he could with regard to the American army encamped at Four Corners. "I trust to your discretion," said the officer, "as to what means you will use to get it, but we want to know the extent of the force and the prospect of their moving. I will give you an Indian as a guide, and

one who speaks English." Morton withdrew, pleased that the order was not one of recall to his regiment at Montreal, and spent the evening with the Forsyths. The news of his departure, on an errand that involved some danger, even though it would last only a few days, dampened the innocent mirth of the household and the soldier was vain enough to think Maggie gave his hand a warmer pressure than usual when he left. He rose with the first streak of daylight and had finished his breakfast when he was told his guide was waiting. Hastily strapping his cloak on his back and snatching up his musket, he went out and beheld an Indian standing stolidly on the road. Morton noted that he was taller than the average of his race, and, despite his grizzled hair, gave every sign of unabated vigor. He was dressed in native fashion and his face was hideous with war-paint. Without uttering a word, he led the way and they were soon buried in the woods. The Indian's pace, considering the nature of the ground and the obstacles presented, was marvellously rapid, and induced no fatigue. Morton vigorously exerted himself to keep up with him and, as he did so, admired the deftness with which the Indian passed obstacles which he laboriously overcame. The ease and smoothness with which the red man silently slipped through thickets and fallen trees, he compared to the motion of a fish, and his own awkwardness to that of a blindfolded man, who stumbled at every

obstacle. They had travelled thus for over two hours when suddenly the Indian halted, peered carefully forward, and then signed to Morton to stand still. Falling on his knees the guide crept, or rather glided forward. Disregarding his sign, Morton shortly followed until the object of the Indian's quest came in sight. Three deer were grazing on a natural meadow by the side of a creek. Slowly the hunter raised his gun and its report was the first intimation the timid creatures had that an enemy was near. The youngest and plumpest had fallen; the others bounded into the bush. Standing over the graceful creature, whose sides still palpitated, the Indian said, "Lift." It was the first word he had uttered. Morton drew the four hoofs together and did so. "Put on your shoulder," added the guide. Morton laughed and set the animal down; he could lift it but to carry it was out of the question. Without moving a feature, the Indian grasped the deer by its legs, swung it round his neck, and stepped out as if the load were no burden, and which he bore until the swamp was passed and a ridge was reached, when he tied the hoofs together with a withe and swung the carcase from as lofty a branch as he could reach. Half an hour afterwards he pointed to a slight disturbance in the litter of the forest. "Indian passed here this morning."

"How do you know it was an Indian?"

"By mark of moccasin."

"But some white men wear moccasins."

"Yes, but white man steps differently. The wild duck flies no more like the tame duck than the Indian walks like the pale face."

Following the trail thus struck, they were soon hailed by a scout and in the midst of the camp of the frontier guard they sought. Morton counted seventeen Indians lounging or sleeping about the fire, and was told there were as many more lurking in the bush, watching the enemy, who had, of late, been sending in strong parties to make petty raids upon the few settlers who lived on the Canadian side of the boundary. As the captain was absent and would not be back until the afternoon, Morton could only await his return, and the rest was not unwelcome, for the rapid journey had induced some fatigue, and he was interested in watching the Indians, this being his first experience with them apart from white men. They paid much deference to his guide, whose name he now learned was Hemlock, and the Indian of whom he made enquiry told him the reason was that he was the son of a great sachem in a tribe now destroyed, and was "a big medicine." Hemlock accepted their tributes to his superiority with unmoved countenance and as a matter of course, until, after a long pow-wow, he stretched himself on the ground, face-downwards, and went to sleep. Associating the Indians with gloomy moroseness, and a stolidity insensible alike to pain or mirth, Morton was sur-

prised to see how, when left to themselves, they chattered like children, laughed, and played boyish tricks upon one another, and regretted he could not understand what they were saying. If he had, he would have found their talk was the shallowest of banter.

Late in the afternoon the captain returned and warmly welcomed Morton. Although dressed like an Indian, his only distinguishing feature being a captain's scarlet sash, Captain Perrigo was a white man and English in speech, his familiarity with the Indians and their language having been acquired during his residence at Caughnawaga. He was thoroughly conversant with all that was passing in the American camp and expressed his belief that only the timidity of General Hampton prevented a move on Canada. The force was so strong and well-equipped that he believed it could not be checked until the island of Montreal was reached. "How can so large an army move through these woods?" asked Morton; "why, even your handful of Indians could cut up a regiment in half an hour."

"You forget," replied Perrigo, "that the larger part of these American soldiers have been reared on farms and are familiar with the bush. They are at home with the axe, and have scouts as well-trained to bush-fighting as our own. Worse than that, many of the American settlers who left the Chateaugay and the other Huntingdon settlements at the declaration of war are with them as guides."

"I should like to see the American army," said Morton.

"That is easy; we reconnoitre their camp this evening and you may go with us."

By this time dinner was ready and it was more appetizing than Morton looked for. Hemlock, on his arrival, had told where he had left the carcase of the deer, which two of the Indians went for and returned with it slung between them on a pole. This they had cooked along with pieces of fat pork. The venison, for a wonder, proved to be tender and succulent, and was eaten with biscuit, of which there was an abundance. When the time came to move, Perrigo gave the word, when 28 of his men fell into line, Hemlock and Morton accompanying them. They moved in silence in single file, the fleetest runner of their number leading about two hundred yards ahead, to see that the way was clear. No word was spoken except when, on gaining the summit of a stony knoll, Perrigo whispered to Morton that they had crossed the boundary and were in the United States. As they proceeded they moved more slowly, showing they were nearing the enemy, and twice their scout signalled to them to halt while he reconnoitred. The second time Perrigo went forward and they waited while he scanned the enemy's position. On returning, they moved westward, when the accustomed sound of the tramp of a numerous body of troops met the ear of Morton, followed by the commands of the

adjutant. Motioning to Morton to follow him, Perrigo cautiously crept forward to a clump of undergrowth, and peering through it the American camp was seen. To the right stood the cluster of wooden buildings which formed the village of Four Corners, and on the fields that sloped up from it southwards, shone peacefully in the setting sun long rows of white tents. On a small field between the camp and the village two regiments were being drilled; at one corner was a body of mounted officers observing them. The woods, in which the British party lay concealed, so closely hemmed in the thin line of buildings that formed the village, that the parade-ground was not over 300 yards distant.

Morton scanned the troops as they went through their evolutions and marked, with some complacency, that, although tall and wiry men, they were slouchy in their movements and marched like dock-laborers. "Could we not give those fellows a fright?" he whispered to Perrigo.

"If we were sure their patrols are not out we could. If they are, they might flank us."

"No danger," interposed Hemlock, "see!" and he pointed to the guard-house, where the men detailed for the night's patrols were waiting.

"All right," answered Perrigo, "I will send two or three to creep round to the bush on the right to cause a diversion."

"Stay," said Morton, "I want to get a closer view and Hemlock will go with me."

It was so decided upon, and while they picked their way to the west, Perrigo busied himself in extending his little force along the edge of the woods, so as to make their numbers appear formidable. The most dangerous part of Morton's movement was crossing two roads, but Hemlock, who knew the ground thoroughly, selected parts where there were bends, so that they could not be seen by travellers approaching either way. When Hemlock dropped on all fours and crept he was followed by Morton, who found he was at the edge of the field on which the drill was in progress. The troops had gone through the routine movements and were drawn up in line, awaiting the inspection of the general officer, who, with his escort, was riding from the lower part of the field. A stout, elderly man rode in advance on a splendid black horse. Hemlock whispered it was General Hampton. As they drew nearer Morton started in amaze, for among his staff, despite his handsome uniform, he recognized the countenance of the spy he had twice shot at. His astonishment was checked by a gurgling sound of anger from his companion, and turning he saw that Hemlock had partly risen, grasping his musket as if about to fire, his face so swollen with rage that the cords of the neck stood out. "Stop," said Morton, as he clutched his buckskin jacket, "if we fire now while they are in rank we are lost; wait until they are dismissed and in disorder."

"I care not; thrice have I missed him of late; now he falls and Hemlock is revenged." He pulled the trigger, but the flint snapped harmlessly, for the priming had been lost. The disappointment restored his self-possession and he drew back with a scowl that made Morton's flesh creep. On the cavalcade of officers came, chatting unconcernedly, and wheeled within twenty yards of where Morton stood. He had a good view of the spy's face, and he thought he had never seen one where cunning and selfishness were so strongly marked. "A man who would kill his mother if she stood in his way," muttered Morton. "And for his passing pleasure tear out the heart of a father," added Hemlock in a bitter tone. They noticed how haughtily Gen. Hampton bore himself and how superciliously he glanced at the men as he passed up and down their ranks. When he had finished, he put spurs to his horse and galloped towards the house in the village where his quarters were established, followed by his escort. The troops were then dismissed and as each company filed away in the early twilight towards its respective camp, Morton said "Now is our time." Hemlock rose, drew himself to his full height, seemed for a few seconds to be gathering strength, and then let out a screech, so piercing and terrific that Morton, who had not before heard the war-whoop, would not have believed a human being could make such a sound. It was the signal to Perrigo's men, and they answered from different

parts of the bush in similar fashion. The American soldiers, on their way to their tents, halted in amaze, while from new and unexpected quarters, rose the blood-curdling yell, giving the impression that they were being surrounded from the north and west by a horde of Indians, a foe of whom they were in mortal dread. Taken by surprise, they broke and ran towards the camp, and Morton could see the inmates of the tents swarming out and running to meet them, as if to find out the cause of alarm. Hemlock and Morton were now loading and firing as quickly as they could, the former never intermitting his ear-piercing shrieks, while the edge of the bush to their left was dotted with puffs of smoke from the guns of Perrigo's band. "O for five hundred more!" cried Morton in his excitement, "and we would rout this army of cowards." The confusion and clamor in the camp increased and the contradictory orders of officers were paid no heed to by men who only wanted to know where they could fly to escape the detested Indians. Amid the excitement rang out a bugle, and turning whence the sound came, Morton saw it was from the General's headquarters and that, to its summons, horsemen were urging their way. "Huh!" exclaimed Hemlock, "these are scouts; some of them Indians. We must go, for they will hold the roads." With a final yell he plunged into the bush and Morton followed. They had not gone far when Hemlock turned and grasped his shoul-

der. As they stood, the hoofs of advancing horses were heard. The sound came nearer and Morton guessed they were riding along the east and west road in front of where he stood and which they had been about to cross. The troop swept past and then the order "Halt!" was shouted. "Louis, take five men and scour the bush from the river up until you hear from the party who are searching the bush from above. The screeching devils who hid here cannot escape between you. We will patrol the road and shoot them if they do." The motion of the men ordered to dismount was heard.

"Quick," whispered Hemlock, "or they will be upon us," and facing westward he led to the brink of what seemed to be a precipice, from the foot of which rose the sound of rushing water. Hemlock slipped his gun into his belt in front of him and did the same with Morton's, then, before he knew what was meant, Morton was grasped in his iron clutch, unable to move, his head tucked into his breast, and with a wild fling over the edge of the bank they went rolling and crashing downwards, through the bushes and shrubs that faced it. On they rolled until a final bounce threw them into a pool of the river. Without a moment's delay, Hemlock caught Morton's right arm and dragged him a considerable distance down the narrow and shallow stream behind a clump of bushes. Breathless and excited by the rapid motion, Morton sank prone on the turf, while Hemlock, laying aside the

guns, which the water had rendered useless, drew his tomahawk, which he held ready for use, while he bent forward listening intently. In a few minutes Morton became conscious of men stealthily approaching, and devoutly thanked God when he perceived they were all on the other side of the river from where they were concealed. On they came, searching every place of possible concealment, with a rapidity that only children of the woods can attain. Soon they were directly opposite and passed on. Hemlock relaxed his strained attitude, drew a long breath, and sat down beside Morton. "They did not think we had time to cross the river, but when they do not find us they will come back on this side."

"What shall we do next?" asked Morton.

"Wait till it is dark enough to creep across the road at the bridge."

"And if they come back before then?"

"Fight them," abruptly answered Hemlock.

In the narrow gorge where they lay the gloom quickly gathered, and it soon grew so dark that Morton's fears as to the searching-party returning were relieved. When the last streak of day had disappeared, Hemlock led the way, and they crept as quickly as the nature of the ground would permit down the river, whose noisy brawl blotted out the sound they made.

Coming out at a pond, where the water had been dammed to drive a small mill, Hemlock stopped

and listened. The road with its bridge was directly in front, and it was likely guards were there posted. As they watched, the door of a house opened, and a man came out with a lantern. It was the miller going to the mill. As he swung the light its beams shone along the road, failing to reveal a sentinel. When he passed into the mill, Hemlock led the way under the shade of the trees that fringed the mill-pond, crossed the road, and down into the rocky bed of the stream on the other side. Pausing to let Morton gain his breath after the run, he said in his ear, "We are safe now and can wait for the moon."

"Can't we rejoin Perrigo?" asked Morton.

"No; scouts in woods over there; hide tonight and go back tomorrow.

The strain of excitement over, Morton stretched himself on the ferns that abounded and quickly fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Morton opened his eyes he found the dell, or rather gorge, for the sides were almost precipitous though clad with vegetation, was lit up by the moon, and Hemlock by his side, sitting Indian fashion, clasping his knees. Without uttering a word, he rose on perceiving the young officer was awake and lifted his gun to move on. Morton obeyed the mute sign and they began to descend the bed of the stream. It was a task of some difficulty, for it abounded in rocks and often there was no foothold at the sides, the water laving the cliffs that formed the banks. Had it not been that the season was an unusually dry one, leaving the river bed largely bare, Morton could not have kept up with his companion. Chilled by his wet garments, the exercise was rather grateful to him and he exerted himself to overcome the obstacles in his path. As they went on, the banks grew higher and the gorge more narrow, until, turning a bend, Morton perceived the river dashed down a channel cleft out of a rock, which rose a pillared wall on one

side and on the other had been rendered concave by the washing down of the debris of ages. High above, shafts of moonlight struggled thru' the foliage and, falling irregularly on the sides, brought into ghastly relief the nakedness of the walls of the rocky prison. Deeply impressed Morton followed his guide down the gloomy chasm, whence the sound of falling water came, and they passed two small falls. Below the lower one, where the walls drew nearer, as if they grudged the scanty space they had been affording the tumultuous stream for its passage, the cliffs grew loftier. Hemlock halted, and pointing to a water-worn recess in the rocks, that afforded some covering, said, "Sleep there." Morton lay down, but he was in no humor to sleep again. The magnificence of the rock-hewn chamber in which he lay, with a giant cliff bending over him, had excited his imagination, and his eyes wandered from the foaming falls in front of him to the solemn heights, whose walls were flecked with shrubs and topped by sprucetrees. The contrast of the unceasing noise and motion of the river with the eternal silence and imperturbability of the rocks, deeply impressed him. Thus time passed and when he had scanned the scene to his satisfaction, his interest turned to his companion, who had left him and stood beneath a pillar of rock higher than its fellows, where the chasm narrowed into a mere tunnel. Evidently supposing that Morton was sound asleep, he was going through

those motions of incantation by which Indian medicine-men profess to evoke the spirits. He writhed until his contortions were horrible, while the working of his features showed he was inwardly striving to induce an exalted and morbid condition of feeling. He smote his breast resounding blows, he flung himself downwards on the rock and shook himself until his body jerked with involuntary twitchings, he shrieked in hollow tones and plucked at his hair, until the sweat rolled down his cheeks. After a fit of hysterical laughter he sank in a swoon, which lasted so long that Morton was debating whether he should not go over to him. All this time the moon had been sailing upward and now stood directly over the chasm, its beams transforming the foaming river into a channel of milky whiteness and, where it broke into curls at the falls, into streams of pearls, while the foliage that tempered the stern outline of the rocks, bedewed by the spray that kept them constantly moist, glistened as if sprinkled with diamond-dust. The moonlight streamed on the prostrate body of the Indian, and as he awoke from his trance and slowly raised himself, Morton read in his face a wonderful change—a look of calmness and of supernatural ecstasy. With great dignity he drew himself up and stepped forward a few paces until he stood directly beneath the pillar of rock. Then he spoke: “Spirit of the wood and stream, who loves this best of all thine abodes, come to me.

Hemlock seeks thee to help him. The wounded moose will never breathe again the morning-air, the stricken pine-tree never put forth fresh shoots, and Hemlock is wounded and stricken and growing old. Shall the hand grow feeble before the blow is dealt, the eye grow dim before mine enemy is slain, and my ear grow deaf before it hears his death-groan? The leaves that fall rot and the water that passeth returneth not; therefore, oh Spirit, grant to Hemlock his prayer, that before night comes he may find whom he seeks. Again, this day, has he escaped me, shielded by his medicine. Break the spell, O Spirit; take away the charm that holds my arm when I aim the blow, and pluck away the shield the evil ones hold over him! The eagle has his nest on the hill and the fox his lair in the valley, but Hemlock has no home. The doe fondles its fawn and the tired swallow is helped across the great water on the wings of its sons, but Hemlock has no children. The light of his eyes was taken from him, the joy of his heart was frozen. The Yankee stole his land, slew his brothers, bewitched his only daughter, and drove him away, and now he is a sick-struck man, whom none come near. Spirit, grant the prayer of Hemlock; break the spell that binds me, that I may taste the blood of mine enemy and I shall die happy."

He paused and assumed a listening attitude as if awaiting an answer. That in his morbid state of

mind he fancied he heard the Spirit in reply was evident, for he broke out again:

"I am desolate; my heart is very bitter. The smoke of the wigwams of my clan rises no more; I alone am left. When the north wind tells where are the leaves of last summer I will say where are the warriors of my tribe. As the beaver the white man came among us, but he crushed us like the bear; the serpent sings on the rock but he bites in the grass. We were deceived and robbed of the lands of our fathers. Our destroyer is near, he is on the war-path, his hatchet is raised against the Great Father. Blind his eyes, trip his feet with magic, O Oki, and take the spell from the arm of Hemlock. The eagle soars to the mountain when the loon keeps to the valley; the snow-bird breasts the storm when the moose seeks the cedar-brake; the wolf knows no master and the catamount will not fly, so the Indian clings to his hunting-ground and will not be the slave of the stranger. Spirit, help to destroy the destroyer and to rob the robber. The hunted deer dies of his wounds in the strange forest. The arrows of the Indian are nigh spent and he mourns alone. The glory of our nation has faded as the fire of the forest in the morning-sun, and few live to take revenge. Oki, speak, and strengthen the heart of Hemlock for battle!"

The Indian fell prostrate before the gaunt pillar of stone to which he spoke and lay there for some time. When he rose, there was a weary look in his im-

passive features. "The Spirit has spoken: he tells Hemlock he will answer him in a dream." Advancing towards Morton he lay down and fell asleep.

High above him shafts of sunlight were interwoven with the foliage of the trees that overhung the crest of the chasm, forming a radiant ceiling, when Morton awoke. The weirdly romantic gulf in which he lay, coupled with the strange scenes of the night, caused him to think the past was a dream, but going over the several details the sense of reality was restored, and there, a few feet from him, was stretched the sinewy form of the Indian. "Who could fancy that a being so stolid, heavy, and matter-of-fact," asked Morton of himself, "should show such keenness of feeling and so active an imagination? And, yet, how little we know of what sleeps in the bosoms of our fellows. Mark that sullen pool above the cataract! How dead and commonplace its water appears. It is swept over the brink and, breaking into a hundred new forms, instantly reveals there dwelt dormant beneath its placid surface a life and a beauty undreamt of. We are not all as we seem, and so with this much-tried son of the forest."

He rose to bathe his stiffened limbs in the river and the motion caused Hemlock to spring to his feet. He glanced at the sky, and remarked that he had slept too long. While Morton bathed, Hemlock busied himself in contriving a scoop of withes and birch bark, with which, standing be-

neath the fall, he quickly tossed out a number of trout. A flint supplied fire and on the embers the fish as caught were laid to roast, and whether it was so, or was due to his keen appetite, Morton thought they tasted sweeter than when cleaned. With the biscuit in their pouches, though wet, they made a fair breakfast. As they finished, a faint echo of drums and fifes was wafted to them. "We will stay a little while," said Hemlock, "to let the scouts go back to camp, for they would search the woods again this morning."

"And what then?" asked Morton.

"We will go back to Perrigo, who is near-by."

"Would they not fly to Canada after what they did?"

"Indians are like the snake. When it is hunted, it does not fly; it hides. They are waiting for us."

"Where were you taught to speak English so well, Hemlock?"

"I did not need to be taught; I learnt it with the Iroquois. I was born near an English settlement and my choice companion was an English girl, we played together, and were taught together by the missionary; long after, she became my wife."

"But you are not a Christian?"

"No; when I saw the white man's ways I wanted not his religion."

"And your wife, is she living?"

"Hemlock does not lay his heart open to the stranger; he is alone in the world."

Respecting his reserve, and tho' curious to know if the guardian-spirit of the chasm had spoken to him in his dreams, Morton changed the subject, the more so as he did not wish his companion to know that he had been the unwitting witness of his invocation ceremonial. He asked about the chasm in whose solemn depths they found shelter, and Hemlock told how it had been known to all the seven nations of the Iroquois and regarded by them as a chosen abode of the spirits, the more so as its origin was supernatural. There had been a very rainy season and the beavers had their villages flooded and were in danger of being destroyed. Two of them volunteered to visit the spirit-land and beseech the help of their *oki*, which he promised. He came one dark night and with a single flap of his tail smote the rock, splitting it in two and allowing the waters to drain into the low country beneath. Morton listened gravely, seeing his companion spoke in all seriousness, and thought the tale might be an Indian version of the earthquake, or other convulsion of nature, by which the bed of sandstone had been rent asunder, and a channel thus afforded for the surplus waters of the adjoining heights. The trees and bushes which had found an airy foothold in crevices, and the weather-beaten and lichened faces of the cliffs, told how remote that time must have been.

It was wearing on to noon before Hemlock considered it safe to move. The delay they spent in

cleaning their arms, and Morton, to his regret, found that his powder was useless from being wet. The Indian, more provident, had saved some in a water-proof pouch of otter skin, but he had too little to do more than lend a single charge for his gun. Morton took the opportunity to clean and arrange his uniform as he best could and when ready to move felt he looked more as became an officer of the King's army than when he awoke. Hemlock led the way to where a cleft in the wall of rocks afforded a possibility of ascent, and, with the occasional aid of his outstretched arm, Morton managed to reach the summit. When he had, he perceived he stood on a plain of table-rock, the cleavage of which formed the chasm, of whose existence the explorer could have no intimation until he reached its brink. They had not gone far, until Hemlock halted and looked intently at the ground. "A party of Yankees have passed here within an hour; a dozen or more of them. See the trail of their muskets!"

"How do you know they have just passed?"

"The dew has not been dry here over an hour and they passed when it was gone. They are searching for us, for one went to that bush there to see no one was hiding."

Morton looked perplexed, for nothing was more distasteful than to be taken prisoner. "Had we not," he suggested, "better return to the chasm and wait for night?"

"It is too late," replied Hemlock, "when they come back they would see our trail and follow it. We will have to go on and if we get across the road we are safe," and without another word he went on until the road was reached. On scanning it, before making a dash across, they perceived, to their dismay, a mounted sentry so posted as to give a clear view of the portion of the road they were standing by. Hemlock gave a grunt of disappointment and returned into the bush and after a few minutes' rapid walking turned to Morton with the words, "You stay here, until I go and see the road. Over there is the track of a short-cut between Four Corners and the blockhouse, so if Yankees pass they will keep to it and not see you. Do not leave until I come back."

Morton threw himself on the grass to await his report, and the rest was grateful, for the day was hot and their short tramp fast. The minutes sped without sign of the Indian, who he conjectured was finding it difficult to discover a clear passage. It was now plain that the Americans had discovered their tracks of the preceding evening and had established a cordon to ensure their capture. So absolute was Morton's faith in Hemlock's skill that he felt little perturbed and was confident they would be in Perrigo's camp before long. Then his thoughts wandered to a subject that had come of late to be pleasant to him, to the household by the Chateaugay, and he saw in fancy

Maggie bustling about her daily tasks, and he smiled.

"In the name of the United States of America I command you to yield as prisoner," shouted a voice with a nasal twang.

Morton bounded to his feet. In front of him, within four yards, stood the spy, holding a musket, with his finger on the trigger.

"I mout hev shot ye dead a-laying there," he said, "but I mean to take game like you alive. I can make more out o' your skin when you can wag yer tongue. Yield peaceable, young man, and giv up yer arms."

"Yield! And to a spy! Never!" shouted Morton indignantly, and he sprang like a panther at his foe. Quick as was his movement, the American was not quite taken by surprise, for he fired, but the bullet missed. The next moment Morton was on him and they grappled. Both were strong men, but the American was older and had better staying power, and as they wrestled Morton felt he would be thrown, when he bethought him of a certain trip he had often used successfully in his school days. He made the feint, put out his foot, and the American fell with a crash, underneath him.

"Villain," he whispered hoarsely, "you twice escaped me, but will not again," and he grasped his throat with one hand while he held his right arm with the other.

"Quarter," gasped the American, who was in danger of being choked, "I yield."

"Quarter to a spy!" exclaimed Morton.

"I ain't no spy. I'm Major Slocum, brevet-rank, of Ginral Hampton's staff."

"Not a spy! You were to have been shot for one."

"I was on special service, when I was informed on by an ongrateful cuss. I'm an honorable officer and appeal to yer honor as a Britisher. Take my sword; I yield your prisoner."

"If I let you go; will you lead me in safety across your lines, and release my guide Hemlock, if he has been taken prisoner?"

"Sartainly I will; Slocum's word is as good as his bond. Take your hands off me and I will set you and your Injun to hum in an hour."

Morton released his grasp, and stood up, drew his sword, and awaited Slocum's rising. With a deft movement the American thrust his hand into his belt, drew a heavy, short-bladed knife, and shot it forward from his palm with an ease and dexterity that indicated much practice. Morton's eye caught the gleam of the steel and he sprang back, and in so doing saved his life, for the point of the blade, which would have pierced his breast, stuck in his right thigh for an instant and dropped out. In a towering passion of indignation, which made him unconscious of the pain and flow of blood, he rushed upon the American, who had sprung to his feet and lifted his sword in time to foil Morton's thrust. "Vile wretch, you shall die as traitors die!" exclaimed Morton, and the clash of steel was

incessant. He was much the better swordsman, but his impetuosity and anger deprived him of the advantage of his skill, and stepping backward, Slocum's long sword, wielded by his long arm, kept him at bay. Morton's anger increased with the difficulty in dealing a deadly thrust, until, in making a lunge, he stumbled over a fallen log. Had he been unwounded he would have instantly recovered himself. The wrench to his pierced leg shot a thrill of agony to his heart, and the weakened knee refused its office. In a moment Slocum had him on his back and planting his foot on the bleeding wound, pressed it with all his might, while he placed the point of his sword on his throat. A mocking leer lit up his yellow face as he said composedly: "I don't see how yer mother let you go out alone; you're green as garden-sass. Thought Major Slocum would be your obedient servant and lead you and yer infernal Injun past the lines! You poor trash of a Britisher! An you sucked in my talk about honor and let go yer holt on my throat! You poor innocent, its like stabbing a baby to put my sword through yer gizzard. Say, sonny, wouldn't you like to live?"

The pain of his wound was excruciating, yet Morton answered composedly, "I'd die a thousand times before I would beg my life of you. I am not the first of His Majesty's service to have lost his life through believing there was honor in an American officer."

"I'm a citizen of the great Republic and will be doing a patriotic dooty in killing you, and, like Washington, after hanging Andre, will take a good square meal with the satisfactory feeling that there is a red-coat less in the world. But there ain't no comfort in killing a chick like you. Say, what will ye give, if I let you go? I will take an order on Montreal. Slocum ain't the man to refuse to earn an honest dollar and do a charitable action. Yer father maybe is a Lord or a Dook, and he can come down handsum. Why don't yer speak? I ain't a mind to do all the talking."

"If I was fool enough to believe you and spare your life it is enough. Torture me not with your dishonorable proposals. I can die as becomes a British soldier."

"Yer can, eh? Waal, what if I don't mind to kill you? Perhaps Slocum sees he can make more by toting you into camp. It ain't every day a British officer is caught and I mout get promotion. Kurnel Slocum would sound well. Come now, hadn't yer better sign a little order on your father's agents for a neat little sum, payable to Major Slocum for vally received? Yer wound hurts, don't it?" enquired Major Slocum with a grin, as he thrust the toe of his boot into it. Involuntarily, Morton gave a stifled shriek of pain and lay gasping, while his tormentor looked down upon him with a smile, enjoying his sufferings. As Morton's eyes rolled in agony, the sight of Hemlock met their

gaze. He was stealing stealthily up behind Slocum, who stood all unconscious of his danger, torturing his victim in the hope he would purchase his release. Nearer the Indian came; his arms now opened out,—he stood behind Slocum,—they closed,—he was in their grasp, and was thrown with a heavy thud on the ground, when, Hemlock bound his arms and legs with his sash. Then, with dreadful calmness, he drew his scalping-knife and knelt, one knee on the breast of the prostrate man. “Many times you have escaped me, Slocum, but you die now. The oki granted what I asked; the spell is gone. I tracked you long, but now you are mine. I will not kill you at once. You shall die by inches, and have a taste, before the dark cloud swallows you, of the bitterness I have drank at your hands for years.”

So saying, with infernal ingenuity, the heritage of his tribe in the art of torture, he stripped Slocum of his clothing and proceeded to draw cuts with his knife on different parts of the body, nowhere making an incision any deeper than requisite to cause the quivering flesh to feel the full pain. The wretched man plied the Indian with all manner of promises to induce him to desist, and on seeing he was relentless in his purpose, was about to shriek in the hope of attracting aid, when Hemlock caught him by the throat, and snatching up handfuls of forest-litter forced them into his mouth. Then he resumed his dreadful task. Morton, who had alter-

nated from a state of semi-stupor to that of insensibility, looked on in his lucid intervals with sickened horror, and begged Hemlock to desist. He paid not the slightest heed but went on for hours, gloating over the agonies of his victim, and adding a fresh wound as the others dulled. Alert even in his dreadful employment, a rustle in the bush caught his ear, and he listened. "It is the Yankee picket going to the blockhouse. If Hemlock could take you with him he would, but you cannot travel. They will make you prisoner and care for your wound. And now Hemlock must finish his revenge." With one swift sweep of the knife, he cut the throat of his now fainting victim, with another he severed his scalp, and flourishing it above his head, vanished in the woods. Immediately afterwards a body of blue uniformed soldiers appeared, who shouted with surprise at seeing the major, naked, stiff and scalped, and a wounded British officer lying near him. Part hurried to each. As those who went to the side of Morton stooped over him and moved him, he fainted.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Morton recovered consciousness he found he was in a large apartment, the sides formed of heavy logs, and surrounded by American soldiers, who were talking excitedly of the discovery of the dead body of Major Slocum. On seeing their prisoner was restored to his senses, they plied him with questions, in the hope of clearing up the mystery, but he felt so languid that he made no reply, and simply begged for water. On the arrival of two ox-carts, the corpse was lifted into one and the wounded man into the other. On being carried into the air, Morton saw that the building he had been in was a small blockhouse, so placed as to command the road which led to Canada. The jolting of the cart during the short drive was agony to him, and he was thankful when the log shanties of the village of Four Corners came in sight and the rows of tents of the camp. The cart halted at the door of a tavern, where he assumed the general must be, and soon an orderly came out and directed the driver to an outhouse, into which two soldiers carried him. It was a small, low-roofed stable, and in one of the stalls they laid Morton. Closing the door, he was left in darkness, and so remained until it reopened to

admit what proved to be a surgeon. He examined the wound, picked it clean, put in a few stitches, bound a wet-bandage round it, and had a pail of water placed near. "You keep that cloth wet," he said to Morton, "and drink all you please, it will keep down the fever, and you will be well in a week. You have only a flesh-cut; had it been on the inside of the leg instead of the front you would have been a dead man in five minutes."

"I am very weak."

"Yes; from loss of blood; I will send you some whisky and milk."

When the attendant appeared with the stimulant, Morton sickened at the smell of the whisky, but drank the milk. The man approved of the arrangement and disposed of the whisky. Having placed clean straw below Morton, he left him, barring the door. The soothing sensation of the wet bandage lulled him to sleep, and he slumbered soundly until awakened by the sound of voices at the door.

"Now, mem, you'd better go home and leave Jim alone."

"You tell me he's wounded, and who can nurse him better than his old mother?"

"Be reasonable; the doctor said he was not to be disturbed."

"Oh, I will see him; look what I have brought him—a napkin full of the cakes he liked and this bottle of syrup."

"Leave them, my good woman, with me and he will get them."

"No, no, I must see my handsome boy in his uniform; my own Jimmy that never left my side until he listed the day before yesterday. The sight of me will be better than salve to his hurt."

"I can't let you in; you must go to the colonel for an order."

"An order to see my own son! Jimmy, don't you hear me; tell the man to let me in to you. (A pause.) Are you sleeping, Jimmy? It's your mother has come to see you. (Here she knocked). Are you much hurt? Just a scratch, they tell me; perhaps they will let you go home with me till it heals. O, Jimmy, I miss you sorely at home."

Again the woman knocked and placing her ear to a crack in the door listened.

"He ain't moving! Soger man, tell me true, is my Jimmy here?"

"He is, mem; you must go to the colonel. I cannot let you in; I must obey orders."

"If Jimmy is here, then he must be worse than they told me."

"Very likely, mem; it is always best to be prepared for the worst."

"He may be dyin' for all you know. Do let me in."

"There is the captain passing; ask him."

"What's wanted, Bill?"

"This is Jimmy's mother and she wants to see him. Come and tell her."

"That I won't," answered the captain, with an oath, "I want to have a hand in no scene; do as you like to break it to the old woman," and on the captain passed.

"What does he mean? Jimmy ain't to be punished, is he? He would not do wrong. It was just Tuesday week he went to the pasture for the cows and as he came back, there marched a lot of sogers, with flags a-flyin and drums and fifes playin' beautiful. 'O, mother,' says he, 'I would like to join em,' an he kept acoaxin an aworryin me until I let him come up to the Corners an take the bounty, which he brings back to me, dressed in his fine clothes, the lovely boy."

"Now, good woman, you go home an' I will send you word of him."

"That I won't; if Jimmy is here I see him. Word came this morning that the Injuns had sprang on to the camp an' there was a soger killed, stone dead, an' two taken prisoners. An', says I, lucky Jimmy ain't one of them, for so they told me, an' I will hurry up my chores an' go and see him this evenin', an' here I am. An' at the camp they tells me he is over here, and won't you let me see him?"

"Your Jimmy, mem, yes, your Jimmy is—By God, I can't speak the word. Here, take the key and go in; you'll find him right in front o' the door."

The door opened and Morton saw a tidy little woman, poorly dressed, step in. She looked wonderingly around, glancing at him in her search for

her son. Not seeing him, she stepped lightly towards a heap covered with an army blanket, of which she lifted a corner, gave a pitiful cry, and fell sobbing on what lay beneath. To his horror and pity, Morton perceived it was the corpse of a youth, the head with a bloody patch on the crown, from having been scalped. "This is what Perrigo's men did," he thought, "and this is war." Here two women, warned by the sentry of what was passing, entered and did what they could to soothe the inconsolable mother. The succeeding half hour, during which preparations were made for burial, was accounted by Morton the saddest in his life, and when the detachment arrived with a coffin to take the body away, and he saw it leave, followed by the heart-broken mother, he breathed a sigh of relief and took a mental oath that it would go ill with him if he did not help the poor woman to the day of her death.

Some biscuit were brought to him, the bucket refilled with spring-water, the door closed, and barred, and he was left for the night. Weakness from loss of blood made him drowsy, and forgetting his miserable situation, he slept soundly until next morning, when he woke feeling more like himself than he could have believed possible. His wound felt easy and he was glad to find he could move without much pain. The doctor looked in, nodded approval of his condition, and said he would send him breakfast, after partaking of which Mor-

ton turned his attention to his personal appearance, and with the aid of water, which the sentry got him as wanted, improved it somewhat. The day passed without incident, no one interrupting the monotony of his imprisonment. From the sound of wagon-wheels and the hurrying of messengers to and from the tavern, he surmised the army was preparing to move, and that in the bustle he was forgotten. The following morning his vigor had returned to such a degree that he fell to examining his prison-house and so far as he could, by peeping through crevices in its walls of logs, his surroundings, with a view to endeavoring to escape. He had finished breakfast, when an officer appeared, who introduced himself as Captain Thomas of the staff and announced that the General wished to see him. By leaning rather heavily on the American, who proved to be a gentlemanly fellow, Morton managed to hobble the short distance to Smith's tavern, and was led directly to the General's room. On entering, Morton saw a fine-looking old gentleman of dignified bearing, whom he recognized as the one he saw inspecting the troops on the evening of the surprise. He sat in a rocking-chair and before him stood a rough-looking farmer, with whom he was speaking. Waving Morton to take a seat, he went on with his conversation.

"You tell me your name is Jacob Manning and that you are acquainted with every inch of the country between here and Montreal. I will give

you a horse from my own stud, which no Canadian can come within wind of, and you will go to the British camp and bring me word of its strength?"

"No, sir," replied the backwoodsman.

"You will be richly rewarded."

"That's no inducement."

"Fellow, you forget you are my prisoner, and that I can order you to be shot."

"No, I don't, but I'd rather be shot than betray my country."

"Your country! You are American born. What's Canada to you?"

"True enough, General, I was brought up on the banks of the Hudson and would have been there yet but for the infernal Whigs, who robbed us first of our horses, then of our kewows, and last of all of our farms, and called their thievery patriotism. If we Tories hadn't had so much property, there wouldn't a ben so many George Washington - Tom Jefferson patriots. When we were hunted from our birthplace for the crime of being loyal to the good King we were born under, we found shelter and freedom in Canada, and, by God, sir, there ain't a United Empire loyalist among us that wouldn't fight and die for Canada."

"You rude boor," retorted Gen. Hampton hotly, "we have come to give liberty to Canada, and our armies will be welcomed by its down-trodden people as their deliverers. I have reports and letters to that effect from Montreal and, best of all, the per-

sonal report of one of my staff, now dead, sent on a special mission."

"Don't trust 'em, General. We who came from the States know what you mean by liberty—freedom to swallow Whigery and persecution if you refuse. The Old Countrymen are stiff as hickory against you, and the French—why, at heart, they are against both."

"It is false, sir. I have filled up my regiments since I came to this frontier with French."

"It wa'n't for love of you; it was for your \$40 bounty."

The General rose and throwing open the shutter, closed to exclude the sunshine, revealed the army in review; masses of infantry moving with passable precision, a long train of artillery, and a dashing corps of cavalry. Proudly turning to the farmer he said,

"What can stop the sweep of such an army? England may well halt in her guilty career at the sight of these embattled sons of liberty and loosen her bloody clutch upon this continent of the New World."

Neither the sight of the army nor the pompous speech of the General appalled the stout farmer, who replied, "The red-coats will make short work of 'em, and if you don't want to go to Halifax you'd better not cross the lines."

General Hampton made no reply, his good-sense apparently checking his pride, by suggesting the

folly of arguing with a backwoodsman, who had chanced to be taken prisoner in a foray. Summoning an orderly, he commanded that Manning be taken back to prison and not released until the army moved.

"And now, Lieutenant Morton, for so I understand you are named, you are the latest arrival from Canada; and what did they say of the Army of the North when you left?"

"They were wondering when they would have the pleasure of seeing it," replied Morton.

"Ha! it is well to so dissemble the terror our presence on the frontier has stricken into the mercenaries of a falling monarchy. They will see the cohorts of the Republic soon enough: ere another sun has risen we may have crossed the Rubicon."

"The wonder expressed at every mess-table has been the cause of your tarrying here."

"So I am the topic of the conversation of your military circles," said Hampton, with a pleased expression. "And what was their surmise as to the cause of my tarrying here?"

"That you were awaiting orders from General Wilkinson."

The General sprung to his feet in anger and excitement. What! Do they so insult me? Look you, young man, are you telling the truth or dare come here to beard me?"

"On my honor, General Hampton, I only repeat what I have heard a hundred times."

"Then, when you hear it again, that I await the orders of that impudent pill-maker who masquerades at Oswego as a general, say it is a lie! General Hampton takes no orders from him; he despises him as a man and as a soldier—a soldier, quotha! A political mountebank, a tippler and a poltroon. Here I have been, ready to pluck up the last vestige of British authority on this continent for two months past, and been hindered by the government entrusting the Western wing of my army to a craven who refuses to recognize my authority and who lets I would wait on I dare not."

"I meant no offence by my statement," said Morton, as the General paused in striding the room.

"It is well for you that you did not, for I brook no aspersion upon my independence or my reputation as a veteran who has done somewhat to deserve well of his country, and that is implied in alleging, I take my orders from Wilkinson."

Morton reiterated his regret at having unwittingly given offence and would assure the General that he had entertained so high an opinion of him that he did not attribute to him the harsh treatment he had received since taken prisoner. Asked of what he complained, he told of his having been thrust into a miserable stable and having received no such attention as is universally accorded to a wounded officer in camp.

The General smiled somewhat grimly as he said: "Lieut. Morton, your treatment is no criterion of

our hospitality to those whom the fortunes of war throw into our hands. You forget that you were made prisoner under most suspicious circumstances. You were found lying wounded beside the mutilated corpse of that influential citizen who, I may so express it, stepped from the political into the military arena, the late Major Slocum, and everything points to your having been associated with those who slew him and violated his remains. Apart from that grave circumstance, the mere fact of your being found on the territory of the United States government would justify my ordering your execution as a spy."

"Sir," indignantly interrupted Morton, "I am no spy. My uniform shows I am an officer of the King's army and I came upon American soil engaged in lawful warfare, declared not by King George but by your own government. I am a prisoner-of-war but no spy."

"It is undoubted that you consorted with Indians, that you were present with them in the childish attempt to surprise my army the other evening, and that you were with one or more redskins when Major Slocum offered up his life on the altar of his country in a manner that befitted so celebrated a patriot, who to his laurels as a statesman had added those of a soldier. You must understand, for you appear to be a man of parts and education, that Indians and those who associate with them are not recognized as entitled to the

rights of war. They are shot or hung as barbarous murderers without trial."

"If that is your law, General, how comes it that you have Indians in your army?"

The General looked nonplussed for a moment. "Our Indians," he answered, "are not in the same category. They have embraced the allegiance of a free government; yours are wild wretches, refugees from our domain and fugitives from our justice, and now the minions of a bloody despotism."

"I do not see that if it is right for your government to avail themselves of the skill of Indians as scouts and guides that it can be wrong for His Majesty's government to do the same. Between the painted savages I perceived in your camp and those in the King's service, I could distinguish no difference."

"Keep your argument for the court martial which, tho' I do not consider you entitled, I may grant. Leaving that aside, sir, and reminding you of your perilous position, I would demand whether you are disposed to make compensation, so far as in your power, to the government of the United States by giving information that would be useful in the present crisis? As an officer, you must know much of the strength and disposition of the British force who stand in my onward path to Montreal."

Morton's face, pale from his recent wound and confinement, flushed. "If you mean, sir, that you offer me the choice of proving traitor or of a rope,

you know little of the honor of a British soldier or of his sense of duty. It is in your power to hang me, but not to make me false to my country and my King."

"Come, come young man; do not impute dishonor to a Southerner and a gentleman who bore a commission in the Continental army. Leave me, who am so much older and, before you were born, saw service under the immortal Washington, to judge of what is military ethics. We are alone, and as a gentleman speaking to a gentleman, I demand whether you are going to give me information useful in the movement I am about to make upon Montreal?"

"You have had my answer."

The General took up a pen, wrote a few lines, and then rang a bell. Captain Thomas entered. "Take this and conduct the prisoner away," said the General handing him a folded paper. Morton bowed and left the room, fully believing that the missive was an order for his execution. Conducted back to the stable, he threw himself on his straw-heap, indignant and yet mortified at being treated as a spy. He thought of his relations, of his comrades, of his impending disgraceful death, and then clenched his teeth as he resolved he would not plead with his captors but die without a murmur.

The marching of a body of men was heard without. They halted and the door was thrown open. The officer in command said he had come to escort

him to the court-martial. Morton gave no sign of surprise and limped as firmly as he could, surrounded by the files of men, to the tent where the court was awaiting him. The clerk read the charges, which were, that he was a spy, that he had associated himself with Indian marauders in an attack on the camp and, that he had been an accomplice in the murder of Major Slocum. In reply to the usual question of guilty or not guilty, Morton answered that he scorned to plead to such charges, that his uniform was the best reply to his being a spy and if they doubted his right to wear it, he referred them to Major Stovin at Camp la Fourche; that he had made war in a lawful way and with men regularly enrolled in the British service, and, before God, he protested he had no hand in the killing of Major Slocum. "That," said the presiding officer, "is equivalent to your pleading not guilty. The prosecutor will now have to adduce proof of the charges."

The only witnesses were the soldiers who had found him lying in the bush beside the corpse of Major Slocum. Morton peremptorily refused to answer questions. "You place us in a painful position, Lieutenant Morton, by refusing to answer, for we must conclude that you can give no satisfactory explanation of the circumstances under which you were captured. A foul, a diabolical murder has been committed, and everything points to you as being, at least, a party to it. Your

wound in itself is witness against you that you assailed our late comrade-in-arms."

Morton rose to his feet, and holding up his hand said: "Gentlemen, I stand before you expecting to receive sentence of death and to be shortly in presence of my Maker. At this solemn moment, I repeat my declaration, that I had no part in the death of Major Slocum, that I did not consent to it and that if it had been in my power I would have saved him."

"I submit, Mr President," said a member of the court, "that the statement we have just heard is tantamount to Lieutenant Morton's declaring he knows how and by whom Major Slocum came to his death. As one who has practised law many years, I assert that the statement just made is a confession of judgment, unless the defendant informs the court who actually committed the murder and declares his willingness to give evidence for the state. If a man admits he was witness to a murder and will not tell who did it, the court may conclude he withholds the information for evil purpose, and is justified in sentencing him as an abettor at least. In this case, the wound of the accused points to his being the principal. Before falling, Major Slocum, in his heroic defence, deals a disabling wound to this pretended British officer who thereupon leaves it to his associated red-skins to finish him and wreak their deviltry on the corpse."

"The opinion you have heard," said the presiding-officer, "commends itself to this board. What have you to say in reply?"

"Nothing," answered Morton.

"We will give you another chance. We cannot pass over the murder of a brother officer. Only strict measures have prevented many citizens in our ranks, who esteemed Major Slocum as one of their political leaders and of popular qualities, from taking summary vengeance upon you. We make this offer to you: make a clean breast of it, tell us who committed the murder, give us such assistance as may enable us to track the perpetrator, and, on his capture, we will set you free."

"And if I refuse," asked Morton, "what then?"

"You will be hanged at evening parade."

"With that alternative, so revolting to a soldier, I refuse your offer. What the circumstances are which bind me to silence, I cannot, as a man of honor, tell, but I again affirm my innocence."

"Lieutenant Morton, what say you: the gallows or your informing us of a cruel murderer: which do you choose?"

"I choose neither; I alike deny your right to take my life or to extort what I choose not to tell."

"Withdraw the prisoner," ordered the presiding-officer, "while the court consults," and Morton was led a few yards away from the tent. He could hear the voice of eager debate and one speaker in his warmth fairly shouted, "He must be made to

tell; we'll squeeze it out of him," and then followed a long colloquy. An hour had passed when he was recalled.

"We have deliberated on the evidence in your case, Lieutenant Morton; and the clerk will read the finding of the court."

From a sheet of foolscap the clerk read a long minute, finding the prisoner guilty on each count.

Standing up and adjusting his sword, the presiding officer said, "It only remains to pronounce sentence: it is, that you be hanged between the hours of five and six o'clock this day."

Morton bowed and asked if the sentence had been confirmed by the commanding-officer. "It has been submitted and approved," was the reply.

"In the brief space of time that remains to me," said Morton in a firm voice, "may I crave the treatment that befits my rank in so far that I may be furnished with facilities for writing a few letters?"

"You may remain here and when done writing, the guard will conduct you back whence you came, there to remain until execution." With these words he rose, and the others followed, leaving Morton alone with the clerk and the captain of his guard. He wrote three letters,—to Major Stovin, to his colonel, and the longest to his relatives across the Atlantic,—being careful in all to say nothing about Hemlock, for he suspected the Americans would read them before sending. When done, he was taken back to the stable, and left in darkness. He

had abandoned all hope: his voyage across life's ocean was nearly ended, and already he thought the mountain-tops of the unknown country he was soon to set foot upon loomed dimly on his inward eye. The hour which comes to all, when the things of this life shrink into nothingness, was upon him, and the truths of revelation became to him the only actualities. The communings of that time are sacred from record: enough to say, they left a sobering and elevating influence on his character. He was perfectly composed when he heard the guard return, and quietly took his place in the centre of the hollow square. On the field used as a parade ground he saw the troops drawn up in double line. At one end were the preparations for his execution, a noose dangling from the limb of a tree and a rough box beneath to serve as his coffin. There was not a whisper or a movement as he passed slowly up between the lines of troops. It seemed to him there was unnecessary delay in completing the arrangements; and that the preliminaries were drawn out to a degree that was agonizing to him. At last, however, his arms were pinioned and the noose adjusted. The officer who had presided at his trial approached "By authority of the General," he whispered, "I repeat the offer made you: assist us to secure the murderer of Major Slocum and you get your life and liberty."

Morton simply answered, "Good friend, for Jesu's sake, leave me alone."

The word was not given to haul the tackle and Morton stood facing the assembled ranks for what seemed to him to be an age, though it was only a few minutes. The bitterness of death was passed and the calmness of resignation filled his soul. Again the officer spoke, "What say you, Lieutenant Morton?" Morton merely shook his head. Presently a horseman was seen to leave the General's quarters and an orderly rode up. "By command of the General, the execution is postponed." Morton's first feeling was that of disappointment.

As he was hurried back to the stable, the order dismissing the troops was given. As they broke up, a soldier remarked to his comrade, "They'd sooner have him squeal than stretch his neck."

CHAPTER V.

ON the afternoon of the second day after the events of last chapter, Allan Forsyth returned from his daily visit to Camp la Fourche excited and indignant. "What think ye," he said to his wife and Maggie, "Lieutenant Morton is in the hands o' the Yankees and they're gaun to hang him."

Maggie paled and involuntarily stepped nearer her father.

"The deils that they be; hoo did they get hand o' him?" asked Mrs Forsyth.

"The story is sune tell't," replied her husband. "He was sent, as ye ken, wi' a despatch to the lines; while there he took part in a bit skirmish, an' the day after was found by the Yankees lyin' wounded in the woods beside the body o' a Yankee officer."

"Weel, they canna hang him for that. Gin the Yankees will fecht, they maun expect to be kilt."

"Ah, ye dinna understan. They say their officer wasna kilt in regular coorse o' war. The body was scalped and carvt in a gruesome fashion, showing plainly the hand o' the Indian, an' they hold Mr Morton accountable."

"But he didna scalp the Yankee?"

"True, gudewife, but he winna tell them wha did. His sword they found beside the corpse, showing they had been in mortal combat."

"Is he sorely wounded?" asked Maggie.

"I canna say for that. It's no likely, for they had him oot ae evening to hang him, and took a better thocht when he was below the gallows."

"How did you hear all this?"

"A messenger came in today with letters from him, sent across the lines under a flag o' truce. It was said in camp Major Stovin was stampin' angry and was going to write back that gin a hair o' the Lieutenant's head is harmed he will hang every Yankee officer that fa's into his hans. I gaed ower to see the messenger and he tell't me the word went that Morton defied General Hampton and his officers to do their worst, that, to save his life, he wadna bring disgrace on his commission."

"Who is the messenger: has he gone back?"

"He's a young lad, a son o' ane o' the settlers in Hinchinbrook. He goes back tomorrow with letters from Major Stovin."

"Will he see Morton?"

"No, no: to be sure thae folk on the lines gang back an' forrit, but they're no likely to let him near. His letters will be taken at the outposts."

"Do you think Major Stovin's letter will save him?"

"That it won't. The lad said the Yankees were fair wud ower the death o' their officer an' will

hang puir Morton to a dead certainty gin he doesna reveal to them wha did the deed."

"An' for what will he no tell?" asked Mrs Forsyth.

"That he kens best. Maybe gratitude to an Indian ca'd Hemlock seals his lips, for oor men believe he was with him at the time."

"What does Hemlock say?" interjected Maggie.

"He's no in camp. He came back three days ago and left for Oka, where he bides."

Until bedtime Morton was the subject of conversation, and the more they talked of him the keener their interest grew in his serious situation. That one whom they had learned to like and respect so much should die an ignominious death shocked them, and even Mrs Forsyth was constrained to say, that much as she disliked Yankees, "Gin I were near eneuch to walk to him, I wad gang on my knees to Hampton to beg his life."

Next morning, while engaged in the stable, Mr Forsyth was surprised by the appearance of his daughter.

"Hey, my woman, what's garrd you to come oot in the grey o' the mornin'? Time eneuch an hour frae this."

"Father, I could not sleep and I wanted to speak to you. If Hemlock was brought back, would he not save Morton?"

"Ah, he winna come back. Doubtless he kens the Yankees wad rax his neck for him. His leevin

for hame shows he is afeard o' what he has dune."

"Yet there's no other hope of saving Morton."

"Too true; gin the actual slayer o' the officer is not surrendered within a few days poor Morton will suffer."

"Well, then, father, you cannot go to seek for Hemlock, and my brothers would not be allowed to leave their duty in camp, so I will go. I can be in Oka before dark and will see Hemlock."

"Dinna think o' such a thing," entreated the father, "the road is lang an' the Indian wad just laugh at you gin you found him, which is dootful."

A favorite child has little difficulty in persuading a parent, and before many minutes Mr Forsyth was won over, declaring "it wad be a shame gin we did naething to try an' save the puir lad." It was arranged she should go at once, the father undertaking to break the news to his wife. All her other preparations having been made beforehand, the slipping of a plaid over her head and shoulders rendered her fit for the journey, and with a cheery goodbye to her father she stepped quickly away. She went to the camp at La Fourche, where she surprised her brothers and got them to search out the messenger who had brought the startling tidings. She had a talk with him, learning all he knew of Morton. Then she went to see the Indians in camp, who readily enough told what little they knew of Hemlock. They believed he was at Oka and did not expect him back, as he said he

would join the force that was being assembled above Cornwall to meet Wilkinson. Thus informed she took the road, a mere bush track, that led to Annfield Mills, now known as the town of Beauharnois, which she reached in the course of two hours or so and walked straight to the house of the only person in it who she thought could help her. It was a log-shanty built on the angle where the St Louis rushes brawling past and the calm waters of the bay, and was of unusual length, the front end being devoted to the purposes of an office. The door stood open and Maggie walked into a little den, in one corner of which stood a desk with pigeon-holes stuffed with papers, and beside it were a few shelves filled with bottles and odds-and-ends, the whole dusty, dark, and smelling of tobacco. At the desk sat a little man, dressed in blue with large gilt buttons.

"Oh, ho, is this you, Maggie Forsyth? Often have I gone to see you, but this is the first time you have dropped in to see me."

"See you, you withered auld stick! I just dropped in to speer a few questions at you."

"Auld stick, Mag; I'm no sae auld that I canna loe ye."

"Maybe, but I dinna loe you."

"Look here, lassie; see this bit airn kistie; its fu o' siller dollars; eneuch to varnish an auld stick an keep a silken gown on yer back every day o' the year."

"An eneuch in thae dirty bottles to pooshen me when ye wad?"

"Ha, ha, my lass; see what it is to hae lear. I didna gang four lang sessions to new college, Aberdeen, for naething. I can heal as well as pooshen. It's no every lassie has a chance to get a man o' my means and learnin'."

"Aye, an its no every lassie that wad want them alang wi' an auld wizened body."

"Hech, Mag, ye're wit is ower sharp. When a man's going down hill, ilka body gies him a jundie. If ye winna, anither will, but we'll let that flee stick i' the wa' for awhile. Where is your faither?"

"At hame: I just walked ower."

"Walked ower yer lane, an a' thae sogers an' Indians roun'!"

"If yer ceevil ye'll meet wi' ceevilty, Mr Milne; an' I'm gaun farther this day, an' just looked in for yer advice."

"Oh ye maun hae a drap after your walk," and here he pulled out a big watch from his fob. "Gracious! it is 20 minutes ayont my time for a dram."

Stooping beneath the table that answered for a counter, he filled a grimy tin measure, which he tendered to Maggie, who shook her head. "Na, na, I dinna touch it."

Finding persistence useless, he raised the vessel to his mouth and with a "Here's tae ye," emptied it. "Hech, that does me guid,—but no for lang. Noo, lass, what can I do to serve you?"

Maggie unreservedly told him all. "An' what's this young Morton to you?"

"Naething mair than ony neebur lad."

"Tell that to my grannie," said the old buck, "I can see through a whin stane as far as onybody an' noo unnerstan why ye turn yer back on a graduate o' new college, Aberdeen, wi' a kist o' siller, and a' for a penniless leftenant."

"Think what thochts ye may, Mr Milne, but they're far astray. The lad is naething to me nor me to him. I am going to Oka because nae man-body is allowed to leave the camp, and I couldna stay at hame gin it was in my power to save a fellow-creature's life."

"An what can I do to help you to save him?"

"Help me to reach Oka and find Hemlock."

"Were it no for thae stoury war-times I wad get out my boat and gang mysel', and there's naebody to send wi' you. My lass, gif ye'll no turn hame again, ye'll have to walk the road your lane."

"I hae set my face to the task an' I'll no gang hame."

"Weel, then, ye'll hae a snack wi' me an' I'll direct ye as well as may be."

A few rods up the St Louis, in the centre of the stream, where it trickled over a series of rocky shelves, stood a small mill, and on the adjoining bank the house of the miller, and thither they went and had something to eat. The miller's wife, a good-looking woman, could not speak English, but

made up her lack in lively gesticulations, while Maggie helped the common understanding with odd words and phrases in French. Justice done to the food hurriedly spread before them, Maggie walked back with Milne until they stood in front of the house.

"There," he said, pointing to planks resting on big stones, "you cross the St Louis and keep the track until you come to the first house after you pass the rapids. It is not far, but the road is shockingly bad. There you will ask them to ferry you to the other side, when you've a long walk to the Ottawa before you. I'd advise you to turn yet." Maggie shook her head decisively. "Weel, weel, so be it; he that will to Cupar maun to Cupar. Here tak this," and he put in her hand two silver dollars.

Maggie winced. "I'll hae nae need o' siller."

"Ye dinna ken; ye may get into trouble that money will help you out o'. Dinna fear to take it; I've made (and here his voice sank to a whisper) I've made a hunner o' thae bricht lads by ae guid run o' brandy kegs across the Hinchinbrook line. It's Yankee siller."

Maggie smiled and, as if the questionable mode of their acquisition justified their acceptance, clasped them, and nodding to the little man, tripped her way to the other side of the river. The road, as predicted, proved execrable. Walled in and shadowed by trees, neither breeze nor sunlight pene-

trated to dry it, and it was a succession of holes filled with liquid mud. So bad was it, that an attempt to haul a small cannon along it had to be abandoned despite the efforts of horses, oxen, and a party of blue jackets. Tripping from side to side, and occasionally passing an unusually deep hole by turning into the bush, Maggie made all haste. Once only she halted. A party of artillerymen and sailors were raising a breastwork at the head of the Cascade rapids, whereon to mount a gun that would sweep the river, and she watched them for a while. That was the only sign of life along the road until the white-washed shanty of the ferryman came in sight, in front of which a troop of half-naked children were tumbling in boisterous play, and who set up a shrill cry of wonder when they saw her. Their mother, so short and stout as to be shapeless, came to the door in response to their cries and gazed wonderingly at the stranger. She volubly returned Maggie's salutation and led her into the house, the interior of which was as bare as French Canadian houses usually are, but clean and tidy. Her husband was away, helping to convey stores to the fort at the Coteau, and there was not, to her knowledge, a man within three miles capable of ferrying her across. Could not madam paddle her over? The woman's hands went up in pantomimic amazement. Would she tempt the good God by venturing in a canoe alone with a woman? Did she not know

the current was swift, and led to the rapids whose roaring she heard! No, she must stay overnight, and her good man would take her over in the morning. Maggie could only submit and seated herself behind the house, to gaze towards the other bank which she was so anxious to set foot upon. From where she sat, the bank abruptly sank to a depth of perhaps thirty feet, where a little bay gave shelter to a canoe and a large boat fitted to convey a heavy load. Beyond the rocks that headed the tiny inlet, which thus served as a cove for the ferryman's boats, the river swept irresistibly, and where in its channel between the shore and the islands that shut out the view of the north bank, any obstacle was met, the water rose in billows with foaming heads. Maggie knew that she was looking upon the south channel of the great river, and that the main stream lay on the other side of the tree-covered islands, which varied in size from half a mile long to rocks barely large enough to afford foothold to the tree or two whose branches overhung the foaming current. The motion of the rushing water contrasted so finely with the still-life and silence of the forest that framed it, and the many shaped and many colored islands that diversified its surface, that the scene at once soothed the anxious mind of the peasant maid and inspired her with fresh energy.

"Time is passing like that mighty stream," she thought, "and before another sunset help for Mor-

ton may be too late," and then she asked herself why she, so used to the management of a canoe, should not paddle herself across? She sought out madam and told her what she proposed, was met with energetic protestation, and then was allowed to have her own way. Fortified with directions which she only partially understood, Maggie took her place in the canoe, and waving good-bye to madam and her troop of children, who stood on the landing, pushed out. Unmindful of how the light skiff drifted downwards, she kept its head pointed to the island that lay opposite to her and paddled for dear life. Once she received a shower of spray in passing too near to where the current chafed and fumed over a sunken rock, but she retained her presence of mind, and was glad to see the island draw nearer with each stroke. Just as the gravelly strand seemed within reach, the drift brought her nigh to the end of the island, and she paddled into the channel that lay between it and the islets adjoining, which nestled so closely that the tops of the trees upon them interlaced, furnishing a leafy arcade to the narrow channels that divided them. As Maggie paused for breath after her severe exertion, a sense of the quiet beauty and security of the retreat came over her, and drawing the canoe on to the pebbly beach, she laved her feet while, idly picking from the bushes and vines within reach, she formed a bouquet of colored leaves. She heard the roar of the rapids

beneath and she knew that a few yards farther on lay the deep-flowing north channel, but her nature was not one to borrow trouble and she enjoyed the present to the full in her cool retreat. When she again took her place in the canoe, a few dips of the paddle took it outside the islands, and she saw the main channel of the river—smooth except for great greasy circles of slowly whirling water, as if the mighty river, after its late experience of being shredded in the rapids above, had a nightmare of foreboding of a repetition of the same agony in the rapids to which it was hastening. With steady stroke Maggie urged the canoe forward and did not allow the consciousness that she was drifting toward the rapids discompose her. As the canoe neared the bank, the sweep of the current increased, and her arms began to ache with the violent and long-continued exertion. To her joy, she saw a man standing at the landing and the strokes of her paddle quickened. The canoe was swept past the landing, when the man, picking up a coil of rope, ran downwards to a point, and watching his chance, threw it across the canoe. Maggie caught an end of the rope, and in a minute was hauled ashore. The man, a French Canadian employed to assist the bateaux in passing between lakes St Francis and St Louis, expressed his astonishment at a woman daring so perilous a feat, and his wonder increased when she told him of her intention of going to Oka. "Alone! mademoiselle,"

he exclaimed, "why you will lose your way in the forest which is full of bears and Indians." She smiled in answer, and receiving his directions, sought the blazed track which led to the Ottawa. Familiar with the bush, she had no difficulty in following the marks, for the litter of falling leaves had begun to shroud the path. The tapping of the woodpecker and the chirrup of the squirrel cheered her, and she pressed on with a light and quick step. Hours passed until the gloom that pervaded the forest told her the sun had ceased to touch the tree-tops and she wished the Ottawa would come in sight. While giving way to a feeling of dread that she might have to halt and, passing the night in the woods, await daylight to show her the way, the faint tinkle of a bell reached her. With expectant smile she paused, and poising herself drank in the grateful sound. "It is the bell of the mission," she said, and cheerfully resumed her journey. All at once, the lake burst upon her view—a great sweep of glassy water, reflecting the hues of the evening sky, and sleeping at the foot of a long, low hill, covered to its double-topped summit with sombre-foliaged trees. At the foot of the slope of the western end of the hill, she distinguished the mission-buildings and, running above and below them, an irregular string of huts, where she knew the Indians must live, and behind those on the river's edge rose a singular cliff of yellow sand. The path led her to where the lake narrowed

into a river and she perceived a landing-place. Standing at the farthest point, she raised her hand to her mouth and sent a shout across the waters, long, clear, and strong, as she had often done to her father and brothers, while working in the bush, to tell of waiting-meals. In the dusk, she perceived a movement on the opposite bank and the launch of a canoe, which paddled rapidly across. It contained two Indians, whose small eyes and heavy features gave no indication of surprise on seeing who wanted to be ferried. Stepping lightly in, the canoe swiftly skimmed the dark waters, which now failed to catch a gleam from the fading glories of the evening sky. The silence was overwhelming, and as she viewed the wide lake, overshadowed by the melancholy mountain, Maggie experienced a feeling of awe. At that very hour she knew her father would be conducting worship, and as the scene of her loved home passed before her, she felt a fresh impulse of security, and she murmured to herself, "My father is praying for me and I shall trust in the Lord."

On getting out of the canoe she was perplexed what step to take next. To her enquiries, made in English and imperfect French, the Indians shook their heads, and merely pointed her to the mission-buildings. Approaching the nearest of these, from whose open door streamed the glowing light of a log-fire, she paused at the threshold on seeing a woman kneeling, and who, on hearing her, coolly

turned, surveyed her with an inquisitive and deliberate stare, and then calmly resumed her devotions. When the last bead was told, the woman rose and bade her welcome. Maggie told her of her errand. The woman grew curious as to what she could want with an Indian. Yes, she knew Hemlock, but had not seen him; he is a pagan and never comes near the presbytery. The father had gone into the garden to repeat his office and had not returned; she would ask him when he came in. Mademoiselle could have had no supper; *mon Dieu*, people did not pick up ready-cooked suppers in the woods, but she would hasten and give her of her best. It was a treat to see a white woman, even if she was an *Anglais* and, she feared, a heretic. The embers on the hearth were urged into a blaze, and before long a platter of pottage, made from Indian corn beaten into a paste, was heated, sprinkled over with maple-sugar and set down with a bowl of curdled-cream on the table. Maggie had finished her repast when the priest entered. He was a lumpish man with protruding underlip, which hung downwards, small eyes, and a half-awakened look. "Ah, good-day," he said with a vacant stare. Maggie rose and curtsied, while the housekeeper volubly repeated all she had learned of her and her errand. "Hemlock!" he exclaimed, "we must take care. He is a bad Indian and this young woman cannot want him for any good."

"True; I never thought of that."

"Ah, we must keep our eyes always open. What can a girl like this want with that bold man?"

"And to run after him through the woods, the infatuate! We must save her."

"I will have her sent to the sisters, who will save her body and soul from destruction. She would make a beautiful nun." And the priest rubbed his chubby hands together.

"May it please your reverence," interposed Maggie, who had caught the drift of their talk, "I seek your aid to find Hemlock. If you will not help me, I shall leave your house."

The priest gasped for a minute with astonishment. "I thought you were English; you understand French?"

"Enough to take care of myself, and I wish ministers of your robe were taught in college to have better thoughts of us poor women."

"It is for your good we are instructed; so that we can guard you by our advice."

"For our good you are taught to think the worst of us! I look for Hemlock that he may go and give evidence that will save a man condemned to die. For the sake of innocency I ask your help."

The priest shrugged his shoulders, stared at her, gathered up his robe, grasped his missal with one hand and a candle with the other, and saying, "I leave you with Martine," passed up the open stairway to his bedroom.

"Ah, the holy father!" ejaculated the housekeeper,

"when we are sunk in stupid sleep, he is on his knees praying for us all, and the demons dare not come near. Will you not come into the true church? Sister Agatha would teach you. She has had visions in her raptures. Mon Dieu, her knees have corns from kneeling on the stone steps of the altar. You will not. Ah, well, I will ask their prayers for you and the scales may drop from your eyes."

"Do tell me, how I can find Hemlock?" pleaded Maggie, and the current of her thoughts thus changed, Martine insisted on learning why and how his evidence was needed, and Maggie repeated as much of the story as was necessary. The housekeeper grew interested and said decisively, "the young brave must not die." Covering her head with a blanket-like shawl, she told Maggie to follow, and stepped out. It was a calm, clear night, the glassy expanse of the lake reflecting the stars. Hurrying onwards, they passed a number of huts, until reaching one, they entered its open door. The interior was dark save for the faint glow that proceeded from the dying embers on the hearth. Maggie saw the forms of several asleep on the floor and seated in silence were three men. "This woman has come to find Hemlock; can you guide her to him?"

"What seeks she with him?"

"She has come from the Chateaugay to tell him his word is wanted to save his best friend from death."

The conversation went on in the gutturals of the Iroquois for some time, when the housekeeper said to Maggie, "It is all right; they know where Hemlock is, but it would not be safe to go to him now. They will lead you to him at daybreak. Come, we will go back and you will stay with me until morning."

CHAPTER VI.

THE rising of the housekeeper, whose bed she shared, woke Maggie, and a glance through the small window showed a faint whitening in the sky that betokened the coming of day. Knowing there was no time to spare, she dressed herself quickly, and, joining the housekeeper in the kitchen, asked if the messenger had come. She answered by pointing to the open door, and Maggie saw, seated on the lowest step, in silent waiting, the figure of an Indian. She was for going with him at once, when the housekeeper held her and, fearful of disturbing her master, whispered to eat of the food she had placed on the table. Having made a hurried repast, Maggie drew her shawl over her head and turned to bid her hostess good-bye. The good soul forced into her pocket the bread that remained on the table, and kissed her on both cheeks. When Maggie came to the door, the Indian rose and, without looking at her, proceeded to lead the way through the village and then past it, by a path that wound to the top of the sand-hill that hems it in on the north. Motioning her to stand still, the Indian crept forward as if to spy out the object of

their search. Glancing around her, Maggie saw through the spruces the Ottawa outstretched at her feet, reflecting the first rosy gleam of the approaching sun. A twitch at her shawl startled her. It was her guide who had returned. Following him, as he slowly threaded his way through the grove of balsams and spruces, they soon came to a halt, and the Indian pointed to a black object outstretched upon the ground a few yards from them. Fear overcame Maggie, and she turned to grasp the arm of her guide—he was gone. Her commonsense came to her aid. If this was Hemlock, she had nothing to fear, and mastering her agitation she strove to discover whether the figure, which the dawn only rendered perceptible amid the gloom of the evergreens, was really the object of her quest. Silently she peered, afraid to move a hairsbreadth, for what seemed to her to be an age, and she came to see clearly the outline of a man, naked save for a girdle, fantastically fashioned out of furs of varied colors, stretched immoveable on the sod, face downward. Suddenly a groan of anguish escaped from the lips of the prostrate man and the body swayed as if in convulsions. Her sympathies overcame her fears, and advancing Maggie cried, "Hemlock, are you ill? Can I help you?"

With a terrific bound the figure leapt to its feet, the right arm swinging a tomahawk, and, despite an effort at control, Maggie shrieked. The light

was now strong enough to show the lineaments of the Indian, whose face and body were smeared with grease and soot and whose countenance wore the expression of one roused from deep emotion in sudden rage.

"Hemlock, do not look at me so; I am Maggie Forsyth, come from the Chateaugay to seek you."

Instantly the face of the Indian softened. "Why should the fawn leave the groves of the Chateaugay to seek so far the lair of the lynx?"

"Your friend Morton is doomed to die by the American soldiers and you alone can save him."

"What! Did he not escape? Tell me all."

Maggie told him what she knew, he listening with impassive countenance. When she had done, he paused, as if reflecting, and then said curtly, "I will go with you." It was now fair daylight, and Maggie saw, to her dismay, that the mound upon which she had found Hemlock outstretched was a grave, and that, at the head of it was a stake upon which hung several scalps, the topmost evidently cut from a recent victim. Glancing at the radiant eastward sky, the Indian started, and ignoring the presence of his visitor, fell on his knees on the grave, and turning his face so as to see the sun when it should shoot its first beam over the broad lake, which was reflecting the glow of the rosy clouds that overhung its further point, he communed with the dead. "I leave thee, Spotted Fawn, for a while, that I may meet those who did

thee hurt and bring back another scalp to satisfy thy spirit. Thy father's arm is strong, but it is stronger when he thinks of thee. Tarry a while before you cross the river and I will finish my task and join thee in the journey to the hunting-ground; the arm that oft bore you when a child, will carry you over the waters and rocks. Farewell! Oh, my child, my daughter, how could you leave me? Tread softly and slowly, for I will soon leave my lodge of sorrow and see you and clasp you to my heart." There was a pause, a groan of unutterable sorrow escaped his lips, and he sank lifeless upon the grave. Agitated with deep sympathy, Maggie stepped forward and kneeling beside the Indian stroked his head and shoulders as if she had been soothing a child.

"Dinna tak on sae, Hemlock. Sair it is to mourn the loved and lost, but we maun dae our duty in this warl and try to live sae as to meet them in the warl ayont. He that let the stroke fa', alane can heal the hurt. Gin yer daughter is deed, it is only for this life. Her voice will be the first to welcome you when you cross death's threshold."

"I saw her an hour ago. It is your creed that says the dead are not seen again in this life. I got the medicine from my father that melts the scales from our earthly eyes for a while. Last night I saw my child—last night she was in these arms—last night my cheek felt the warmth of her breath—last night my ears joyed in the ripple of her

laughter. Oh, my Spotted Fawn, the joy, the life of my heart, why did you stray from me?" Then, his mood changing, he sprang up with the words, "Cursed be the wolves that hunted you, cursed be the catamount that crept near that he might rend you! I will seek them out, I will track them day by day, until I slay the last of them." Here he ground his teeth and remained absorbed for a minute, then turning sharply, with a wave of the hand, he beckoned Maggie to follow, and led to the verge of the cliff overhanging the Ottawa. "Stay here until I come back," he whispered and, disappeared over the declivity.

The glorious landscape outstretched at her feet soothed, as naught else could, the agitation of Maggie's mind, for Nature's touch is ever gentle and healing. The great expanse of water, here narrowed into a broad river, there swelling into a noble lake, was smooth as a mirror, reflecting hill and tree and rock. Beyond it, was unrolled the forest as a brightly colored carpet, for the glory of Autumn was upon it, and a trail of smoky mist hung on the horizon. An hour might have sped, when Hemlock reappeared, with paint washed off and dressed in his usual attire. Across his back was slung his rifle; at his heel was a gaunt, ill-shaped dog. "Follow," he said, and turning backward a few paces, led to where the bank could be descended without difficulty. At the foot of it, lay waiting a canoe, with a boy in the bow. Maggie

stepped lightly into the centre, and Hemlock grasping the paddle, shot the light skiff swiftly across the stream. When the opposite bank was gained, he sprang ashore and was followed by Maggie. The boy, without a word, paddled back to the village.

Hemlock was in no mood for conversation. The exhaustion following upon his night-vigil was upon him, and he strode forward through the forest without speaking, Maggie following his guidance. Once he halted, on seeing his dog creeping forward on scenting game. Picking up a stick, he stepped lightly after it, and when a covey of partridges rose, threw his missile so successfully that two of the birds dropped. Tying them to his belt, he resumed his monotonous trot, and several miles were passed when the sharp yelps of the dog suddenly arrested their steps. The alarm came from a point to their left. Hemlock, unslinging his rifle, ran in the direction of the dog, whose baying was now intense and continuous, and Maggie, afraid of losing sight of him, hastened after. A short run brought the Indian to the edge of a slough, in a thicket in the centre of which his dog was evidently engaged in mortal combat with some wild animal. Without a moment's hesitation, the Indian started to pick his way across the morass; partially dried by the prolonged drought, and had passed the centre, when there was a crashing of branches and a huge bear burst out, followed by the dog, which was

limping, from a fractured paw. Before he could turn aside, Hemlock was knocked down by the lumbering brute, which gained the solid ground and was hurrying forward, when, seeing Maggie coming, it sprang for a huge beech tree, with the intent of climbing it. Before it was a yard up, the dog overtook it, had fastened its teeth in its hide and pulled it down. The bear, roused to utmost ferocity by being thwarted, easily caught hold of the disabled dog, held it in its forepaws, and standing on its hind feet, with back resting against the tree, was proceeding to hug its victim to death, when Hemlock came up. He had dropped his rifle in the slough, and instead of waiting to pick it up, had rushed forward to rescue his dog. With upraised hatchet he approached the bear, and dealt it so terrific a stroke, that the light weapon stuck in the skull. With a growl of rage and pain, the bear flung the dog down and before Hemlock could recover himself after dealing the blow, fell upon him, too stunned and weak, however, to do more than keep him under. On catching her first glimpse of the bear, Maggie's inclination was to flee, but, the next moment, the instinct of self-preservation gave way to a feeling of sympathy for the disabled dog, followed by absorbing excitement as the contest went on. When Hemlock fell underneath the brute, she gave a shriek, and rushed to where the rifle lay. Snatching it, she ran to the bear, which lay panting with outstretched

tongue and half-closed eyes, and dealt him a blow with the butt. With a groan the unwieldy animal rolled over motionless, and Hemlock sprang to his feet, and drew his knife. It was unnecessary; the bear was dead. Maggie looked wildly at the Indian, strove to speak, tottered, and fell: the reaction from the delirium of excited feeling that had sustained her having set in. Tenderly Hemlock raised her in his arms, and carrying her to the edge of the swamp, scooped up sufficient water to bathe her forehead. A few anxious minutes passed, when the pallor began to pass away, and suddenly opening her eyes, Maggie asked, "What of the dog?"

"Never mind Toga; are you hurt?"

"No; are you?"

"I am as well as ever, and had not my foot slipped after striking the bear, would have spared you what you did."

"That does not matter," said Maggie, simply, "it was God that put it into my silly head to get the gun and it was His strength that gave the blow—not mine."

"I care not for your God," answered Hemlock in a hollow voice, "I have known too many who profess to be His followers to believe in Him."

"Dinna speak sae," pleaded Maggie.

"Yesterday," Hemlock went on, "I met the topped crow that clings to Oka while taking from a squaw her last beaver-skins to say masses for her dead husband, and I cursed him to his teeth as a

deceiver that he may eat the corn and give back to his dupes the cob."

Unheeding his words, Maggie rose and went towards the dog, which was still alive, and began to stroke its head. Its eyes, however, sought not her but his master, and when Hemlock put down his hand, the dying animal feebly tried to lick it. At this sign of affection, the eyes of Hemlock moistened, and falling on his knees he alternately patted the dog and shook his unhurt paw. "My Toga, my old friend, my help in many a hunt, my comrade when we were alone for weeks in the wilderness, are you too going to leave me? You are dying, as the Indian's dog should die, in the fury of the hunt. A claw of the bear I shall wrap in a piece of my wampum belt and put into your mouth, so that Spotted Fawn may know whose dog you were, and you will serve her and follow her until I join you in the happy hunting-ground—and that will not be long."

As if sensible of what he said the dog whimpered, and with a last effort placed its head in his outstretched hands. Then it gave a kick or two, and died.

The Indian rose, and selecting a knoll where spruces grew thickly, kindled a fire. Wrapping the two partridges tightly in wet grass and several folds of green birch bark, he waited until there were embers, on which he placed them, and heaped fresh fuel. Asking Maggie to keep up the fire, he

left and was away for some time. When he came back he had the bear's pelt and several slices of steak, which he proceeded to broil. On lifting the partridges, their bodies came out clean from their covering of feathers, and on tearing them apart the entrails, dried and shrivelled, were easily drawn. Maggie had eaten many a partridge, but a sweeter bite than the breast of one so cooked she had never tasted, and with a piece of the bread in her pocket, she made a light but refreshing dinner. The bear-steak she could not look upon, but like qualms did not interfere with Hemlock's appetite, who ate them with greater relish because part of his late enemy and the slayer of his dog. He had filled his flask with water from a spring near by, and Maggie remarked, if she "only had a pinch o' saut, she couldna have asked for a better dinner." Trimming and scraping the bear's hide, to make it light as possible, Hemlock wrapped it into a bundle, and strapped it on his back. Then looking to the priming of his rifle, he told Maggie he was ready.

"But the puir dowie; will ye no bury him?"

"I have buried him," answered Hemlock, "and poisoned the carcass of the bear that it may sicken the wolves that eat of it."

The tongue of Hemlock was now free, and as they trudged on, he kept up a constant conversation, surprising Maggie by the extent of his information and the shrewdness of his judgment. Becoming conscious that the sun was descending, she

expressed a fear that she could not reach home that night. "No, you cannot, and I do not mean you should, but you will rest safe before sunset. I am taking you to the fort at Coteau-du-lac."

"That is oot o' oor way, Hemlock."

"Not very far; it is necessary I see Colonel Scott as to how to save Morton."

Maggie said no more, for that was reason enough to go a hundred miles out of the way, though she thought with pain of the anxiety her absence for another night would give her parents. "Father will think I did not find Hemlock at Oka and that I am looking for him," she concluded at last, "and will not borrow trouble about me."

CHAPTER VII.

COLONEL SCOTT was pacing the walk in front of the battery of the little fort of Coteau-du-lac, viewing alternately lake St Francis, glittering peacefully in the rays of the fast westering sun, and the swift-running river into which it contracted where he stood, with the surges of the rapids farther down. He was tall, and his face was that of a man who had intellect to conceive and will to put his conceptions into force. To the door of a house larger than any of its neighbors, and before which a sentry paced, the Colonel often glanced and when a lady came out, he stepped to meet her. It was his wife, who joined him for an airing before dinner. After admiring, as she had done every day since her arrival, the contrast between the lake and the river, as it went sweeping downwards between forest-covered islands, she asked, "And is there any news? I heard an arrival reported."

"None since the despatch of last night and it said Wilkinson was still at Sackett's Harbor."

"So we may not expect his flotilla of boats this week?"

"No, and were I in Sir George Prevost's place, they would never leave Sackett's Harbor."

"Why, you have told me his Excellency has not sufficient naval force to attack them."

"I would not attack the flotilla; I would render its purpose abortive. What is the American plan of invasion? I can give it to you in a nutshell, Helen. Wilkinson is to take possession of the St Lawrence with his flotilla and is to meet Hampton at the mouth of the Chateaugay river, when the combined forces will land on the island of Montreal and capture it and the city. Now, to defeat this plan, it is not necessary to destroy the flotilla. If the line of communication between Wilkinson and Hampton is cut, the whole scheme fails."

"And how would you cut the line?"

"Why, as I have represented time and again to headquarters, by the capture of French Mills. Four hundred men could take and hold that place, and with it in British hands Wilkinson and Hampton would be as completely prevented from acting in concert as if Hampton was back to his slaves in Carolina and Wilkinson to his gally-pots. It provokes me to see the opportunities our forces miss. The war in the time of Washington was a series of blunders on our side and it looks as if the second was going to be a repetition."

"And you blame his Excellency?"

"Yes and his staff. He is brave personally, and he is active to fussiness, but he is unable to plan a campaign or carry it out. Here we have the flower of the British army arriving by every convoy, yet

our policy is a purely defensive one and changed every day. Out upon such a peddling course of action! I would teach the braggarts who lurk on yonder heights that Canada is not to be invaded with impunity, and that she has hearts to dare and die in defence of her independence."

"Well, Norman, it may prove to be all for the best. So far Canada has repulsed every attempt at invasion."

"It is not for the best. I have made suggestion after suggestion to improve the opportunities presented to me, and every one has been set aside, and I am condemned to a course of inaction that galls and frets me."

Here an orderly approached. "An Indian and a young woman want to speak with you."

"I will go," said Mrs Scott.

"Do not," cried the Colonel, "what tete-a-tete may I not have with the lovely squaw."

"Please, sir," said the orderly, "she is not a squaw. She is white and a Scotchwoman by her speech."

"And young to boot," exclaimed Mrs Scott archly, "I shall certainly stay and keep you from falling into temptation."

"Bring them this way," said the Colonel, and the orderly returned with Hemlock and Maggie.

"In truth an odd-matched pair," whispered the Colonel as he saw them approach.

"Why, it's you, Hemlock. I thought you were raising the war-whoop on the Huntingdon frontier.

And who may your companion be? Too young to be your wife—too fair to be your sweetheart.”

The Indian's features relaxed into the nearest approach they ever came to a smile, as he answered, “An arrow from another bow than mine has struck the doe.”

“Well, Hemlock, do you bring me news from Hinchinbrook? When is Hampton going to march?”

In reply, Hemlock briefly told how he had been at Oka, was sought out there by Maggie and for what purpose. The Colonel listened with stern expression as he was told of Morton's peril, and when the Indian had done, he plied Maggie with questions. When she had told all, the Colonel brought his fist down heavily on the cannon beside which he stood as he exclaimed, “I knew these Americans were boasters but I did not think they were capable of such cruelty. Once they hung a gentleman wearing His Majesty's uniform and were allowed to escape under the belief that, tradesmen and farmers as they were, they knew no better, but if they send a second to the gallows, there is not an officer in Canada who would not consider it his duty to challenge every one concerned in the deed.”

With a glance of apprehension at her husband, Mrs Scott with admirable tact strove to divert him from his vengeful mood by changing the subject. Addressing Maggie she asked, “And what is Mr Morton to you that you should risk the peril of these woods to save him? Is he a brother?”

"He is neither kith nor kin to me," answered Maggie.

"The attraction is of another sort, then. Cupid flies his arrows in these woods as well as the red warrior."

Maggie blushed and the Colonel, forgetting his anger, gallantly came to her rescue. "And if he does, madam, I would say to Master Cupid, give me the maiden who, like our fair Maggie, would dare the dragons of the field and flood to save her lover."

"Oh!" retorted Mrs Scott, "that is as much as to say, I would not do that and more for you. What thankless monsters you men are!"

"Nay, spare me, Helen, and as by what she has told us, she has walked from Oka today, perhaps you will take her with you and play the hostess."

"She has done more than walk from Oka today," said Hemlock, "she killed a bear and saved my life."

"What!" cried Mrs Scott in astonishment, and Hemlock told the story of the encounter. When he had done the Colonel stepped forward and grasping Maggie's hands he said, "I honor you as a brave man honors a brave woman, and if there is any possibility of saving Mr Morton's life, it shall be done"

Maggie was too overcome to reply, and Mrs Scott, slipping her arm into hers, led her away to her husband's quarters, leaving Hemlock and the Colonel

in eager converse, which lasted until daylight had nearly faded and until a servant came with word that dinner was waiting the Colonel. Ordering the servant to call one of the sergeants, the Colonel committed Hemlock to his hospitable care and then entered his own quarters. Maggie spent one of the most delightful evenings of her life in the company of the Colonel and his wife, forgetting her weariness and the excitement she had passed through in the enjoyment of social converse of a brighter and wider scope than she had been accustomed. When bedtime came she was solicitous about being called early so that Hemlock might not be kept waiting, when the Colonel assured her he would take her restoration to her home by the Chateaugay into his own hands. When she made her appearance next day, she found her entertainers seated on the veranda, and was concerned to learn that it was near noon and that Hemlock had left at sunrise. The anxious look that flitted across her face, the Colonel relieved by telling her that Hemlock had chosen a route she could not have followed, across the great swamp that lay between the St Lawrence and the Chateaugay, and that he carried a letter to her father, telling where she was and that she would go home by the first safe opportunity.

"And now, my dear Maggie," said Mrs Scott, "You need not be concerned about those at home but be my companion for a few days. Buried away here in these romantic wilds, you cannot

conceive what a treat it is to me to have your society."

"You are welcome, Miss Forsyth," added the Colonel, "and you will get a chance before long of a convoy to Annfield, for I expect one from Kingston by the end of the week."

"But they may be needing me at home, Colonel; my mother is frail and if the Yankees have crossed she will be sore in need of my help."

"Make yourself easy as to that," said the Colonel with a smile. "General Hampton, as I know for an assured fact, has not crossed the frontier and will not for several days, at least—perhaps never, for he has no heart in the undertaking. As to Wilkinson coming, I wish he would. I am just afraid he is going to deprive me of the pleasure of giving him the warm reception I have gone to so much trouble to prepare. After lunch, or rather your breakfast, we will take the boat and see that everything is in order for him."

A couple of hours later they were seated in the Colonel's long boat, manned by four tars, who, however, were spared the labor of rowing all the way, for the wind was favorable. Heading Grande Isle, they sailed down the south channel of the St Lawrence to a narrow point, where, by means of the trunks of huge trees anchored above where rapids foamed, the passage of boats was made impossible and before these obstructions could be lifted out, the Colonel pointed to his wife and

Maggie how a concealed battery aided by sharpshooters hid among the foliage that lined the river would decimate the occupants of the boats. He considered the southern channel to be so effectually closed that Wilkinson would not attempt it and would, therefore, have to take the northern, where he would have to run the gauntlet of the fire of the fort at Coteau-du-lac. "True it is," added the Colonel, "that that channel is wide and the current swift, yet with a fire from both banks many boats must needs be crippled or sunk, and those that do escape would have to face a similar ordeal at Long Point, opposite the Cedars rapids, where another battery has been placed."

"What if the Americans passed in the dark?" suggested Maggie.

"Yes," added Mrs Scott, "or what if they landed a part of their large force before they came within range of the Coteau batteries and assailed them from the land-side?"

"All that I have considered. Were they to pass in the dark, they would not see to shoot the rapids properly, and their angry waters would be more disastrous than our shot. As to a flank movement, I rely on the Indian scouts to bring me word and, fully warned of their coming, these woods are so dense and cut up by swamps, that, with a hundred men, I would undertake to repulse a thousand."

"So you keep constant watch?" asked Maggie.

"Unceasing," answered the Colonel. "If you

take this telescope you will perceive a sail at the upper end of the lake. It is one of the gunboats on the watch, and which would, on appearance of Wilkinson's flotilla, either make for Coteau or if the wind were unfavorable send a row-boat. Then, on that farthest island there is a guard of regulars, who are likely to give the island a name, for already it is called Grenadier island. To the guard on that island, scouts on the southern shore report daily."

"Surely you have contrived well," exclaimed Maggie, "and I just wish the Yankees would come and get what you have prepared for them."

"Their kail het through the reek, as the Scotch say," laughed the Colonel, "well I am just afraid I will not see them. Along the river, between Prescott and Cornwall, there is such a succession of points of attack, that, from all I learn of him, Wilkinson is not soldier enough to overcome."

In returning, the boat landed the party in a cove on Grande Isle, whence, from under the shade of maples, they scanned the lake, shimmering in the sun, and the islets, heavy with trees richly colored by Autumn's fingers, set in it like gems.

"This is so pleasant," remarked Mrs Scott, "that I do not wonder at people growing to passionately love Canada. Do you prefer Canada to Scotland, Maggie?"

"I never saw Scotland," replied Maggie, "but I dearly love Canada and can find it in my heart to

wish that the Colonel may wring the necks of those who are trying to take it away from us."

"Well said!" shouted the Colonel, "and Canada is so favored by nature in her line of defence and in her climate, that I cannot conceive how, if her people are true, she can ever come under the heel of a conqueror."

The day passed happily and so did several others. Accompanying Mrs Scott, Maggie visited the little canals that enabled the boats, that plied between Montreal and Upper Canada, to overcome the rapids, to see the lockmen and their families, and watch the peculiar class of men who assisted the boats in passing upwards, either by poling and towing or by lightening their load with the help of their diminutive carts and ponies. With the garrison and its daily life she became familiar, and the detachment of blue jackets, drafted from the men-of-war at Quebec, partly engaged in manning the gunboats already afloat and in building others, she never wearied in watching. Each day endeared her more to Mrs Scott, who, she learned, had sacrificed her comfort and safety, by accompanying her husband on duty. Following the regiment, she had been with him in India, Egypt, and Spain, and, when ordered on special service to Canada, had unhesitatingly followed him, leaving their two children with friends in England. Maggie saw that her presence was a help rather than a drag upon the Colonel, whom she assisted and cared for as

only a true woman can and preserved him from many privations he must otherwise have undergone. While most anxious to be at home again, it was not without a pang of regret that Maggie learned one morning that a fleet of the King's bateaux was in sight coming down the lake. An hour afterwards she was on board of one, waving farewell to her friends. Landed at the foot of the Cascade rapids, she walked home before sunset.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE army did not begin a forward movement towards Canada on the day of Morton's interview with Hampton. It was only the first of several abortive starts, and the autumn days were drawing towards an end with the army still encamped at Four Corners. The American public was indignant at its inaction: much had been expected of the army, yet it had accomplished nothing, and the campaigning season was near an end. The denunciations of the Albany and New York newspapers Hampton could not stoop to reply to: those of the Washington authorities he answered by laying the blame upon Wilkinson. He was to move on Montreal in conjunction with that general, and his failure to leave Sackett's Harbor he gave as the cause of his own inaction. To the critics who suggested he had sufficient strength to capture Montreal unaided, he represented that his orders from Washington expressly required him to co-operate with the flotilla that was hugging the shelter of Sackett's Harbor. If he was left free to act by the secretary-of-war, he would show the country what he could do, but he was not free.

There were those who thought his excuses were the offspring of his secret wish, to get out of the campaign without risking any great movement. In all those days of dallying, Morton lay forlorn in the stable, sick of his confinement and of prolonged suspense, until the doctor, taking pity upon him, asked, if the General could be induced to grant him the freedom of the camp on parole, would he accept it? Eager to get out of his dismal prison and hopeless of escape, Morton eagerly embraced the offer, and next day he was told he was at liberty to leave his wretched abode during daylight. The boon proved to be of less advantage than he had anticipated. The officers would not consort with him, professing to believe he had been a party to the disfigurement and murder of their late comrade, and the rank-and-file swore at him as an abettor of the Indians and as a Britisher. The miscarriage of the campaign had soured the tempers of the troops, and they were ready to vent it upon Morton or any other of the enemy who came within reach of their tongues. After a few hours' unpleasant experience, Morton returned to his stable indignant and humiliated. Altho' thus cut off from intercourse with the military, he enjoyed the freedom of moving about. Even lying on the grass and watching the face of nature, was inexpressibly sweet to him. In course of time he scraped acquaintance with a few civilians, and especially with a storekeeper, Douglass, a Scotch-

man, who showed him such kindness as he dared without bringing upon himself the suspicion of disloyalty. The weather, which had been uninterruptedly dry and hot, underwent a sudden change, to wet and cold, and from suspense as to when they would march into Canada the troops began to hope that orders would come from Washington to retire into winter-quarters. One particularly cold, rainy evening, Morton retired to rest in a mood that was in keeping with his dismal surroundings, and courted sleep to give him temporary relief. How long he might have been lost in slumber he was unconscious, when awakened by something lightly passing over his face. "Keep quiet," said a voice: "do not cry or you may attract the guard." The darkness was intense; the patter of the rain on the roof the only sound without. The voice Morton recognized at once as Hemlock's.

"How did you get here? Do you not know they would tear you limb from limb if they found you?"

"I know it all, but an Indian brave counts nothing when he goes to save a friend. Get up and go with me."

A momentary feeling of exultation fluttered in Morton's breast at the prospect of liberty, followed by the depressing recollection that he had given his word not to escape.

"I cannot go with you," he said in a voice of despair.

"Why? You are well of your hurt, and you can

run a mile or two if we are followed. Come, my arm will help you."

"Hemlock, had you come a fortnight ago I would have jumped at your call: I cannot tonight, for I have given my word of honor not to escape. I am a prisoner on parole."

"Honor! Did these Americans treat you as men of honor, when they put the rope round your neck? Your promise is nothing. Come!"

"I cannot, Hemlock. Let them be what they may, it shall never be said that a British officer broke his word. Leave me; get away at once, or you may be caught."

"I will not leave without you. Think of the fair doe that sorrows in secret by the Chateaugay for you and sought me out to bring you. Come, you shall be with her before another sun has set."

Morton was puzzled by this speech, but was too anxious concerning Hemlock's safety to delay by asking what it meant.

"Save yourself, Hemlock; the patrol will be round soon, and if you are discovered you are lost."

"I fear not: they cannot take me alive."

"For my sake, then, go; I will not leave, I will keep the promise I have given. Consider this my friend, if you are found here it is death to me as well as you. Go."

"Not without you; I will carry you on my back, whether you will or not," and he laid his hand upon Morton to grasp hold of him. At that mo-

ment, the sound of the tramp of an approaching detachment of soldiers was heard. "It is the patrol, Hemlock; fly for God's sake."

Hemlock stepped to the door for an instant, then turning to Morton whispered, "they have torches and will see what I have done, and that will give the alarm. Come, go with me."

"I cannot," said Morton decisively.

"Then, give me a token to show her who sent me that I did my duty," said Hemlock. Eager for his escape, Morton plucked the signet-ring from his finger and pressed it into the Indian's hand with a farewell grasp. Noiselessly and swiftly Hemlock glided out, across the open, and was lost to sight. Seeing how near the patrol were, Morton closed the door and lay down upon his bed of straw. He heard the tramp of the troops draw nearer, and then a sharp cry of "Halt!" followed by a shout of horror and a volley of curses. "The damned Indians are about!" a voice cried. "Poor Tom," said another, "he died like a stuck pig." "See to the Britisher," shouted a third, "he must know of it." "Back to your ranks," commanded the officer, "I will see to what is to be done." Sending a messenger to headquarters to report, he detailed three others to approach the stable and bring out Morton. One of the three remonstrated. "The redskin may be hiding there and kill us." "Obey orders," yelled the officer to his men, who had peculiar ideas of military obedience. "Our muskets cover you."

Reluctantly they approached, and two simultaneously burst in the door with a rush, while the third held a torch. Their only discovery was Morton lying in his bed. He was roughly dragged to the captain, who, with his men, stood around something stretched upon the grass.

"What do you know of this, prisoner?" asked the captain, and a soldier waved a torch over the object. Morton, with a shudder, perceived it was the body of a soldier that had been stabbed in the breast, and scalped.

"This body is warm," said the captain, "the deed has been done within a quarter of an hour: you lay within 20 yards of its perpetration; I demand what you know of the slaughter of this sentry of the United States army."

Morton hesitated. He had no moral doubt that Hemlock had committed the deed, and that the scalp of the dead man was then dangling from his belt, and in his horror of the act was about to tell all, when he suddenly recollected that by doing so he would show himself ungrateful to Hemlock.

"I neither saw nor heard aught of this foul murder," answered Morton, but his hesitation in replying was noted by men disposed to suspect him. "Let me put my bayonet through him," said one of the soldiers with an oath, as he rushed upon Morton. There was a flash from the adjoining bush, the crack of a rifle, and the soldier fell dead, with a bullet in his forehead.

"Out with the lights," shrieked the captain in a transport of fear, as he struck one torch down with his sword and the others were thrown into the pools of rainwater. For a minute or two they listened with palpitating hearts in the darkness, and then the captain whispered for them to move to headquarters, the lights of which were seen near by. Forgotten by them in their alarm, Morton made his way back to the stable and flung himself down on his pallet of straw, perplexed and agitated. In vain he tried to sleep and the night dragged wearily on. When daylight at last began to dawn upon a scene of sullen rain and sodden fields, the sound of voices told him his captors were on the alert. The door was violently opened and a soldier looked in and reported to his comrades outside, "The varmint is still here," to which he heard the reply, "That beats me!" An hour later a scout entered lighted a candle, and proceeded to examine the floor of the stable and its contents. When he was done, the door was bolted and, Morton felt assured, a sentry placed outside. Breakfast time passed without his caterer appearing and the forenoon was well advanced before he was disturbed, when a detachment of troops halted and an officer entered. "I have come, Mr Morton, to take you to headquarters."

Going out, Morton was placed between files and marched to the General's quarters, where he was shown into a room where several officers were seat-

ed. Motioned to stand at the foot of the table, the presiding officer, a tall, cadaverous man, asked him to tell what he knew of the event of the past night.

"Is this a court-martial and am I on trial?"

"No, it is a committee of enquiry. There ain't no call for trying you, seein' you are already a condemned culprit."

"Then, why should I answer you?"

"Wall, if you make a clean breast of it, we mought recommend the General to commute your sentence."

"And should I not see fit to answer this irregular tribunal?"

"I ain't going to knock round the bush with you. At home, everybody knows Major Spooner as up-and-down, frank and square, and I tell you, if you don't spit out all you know, the rope won't be taken off your neck a second time."

"What I know of last night's shocking event I am ready to communicate to any gentleman who approaches me in an honorable manner, but I scorn to say a word under threats."

The officers here exchanged nods and winks, and one said: "I knew Mister President, he wouldn't tell—he dassn't. He had a hand in killing Jackson—gagged his mouth, mebbe, while the redskin drew his knife."

Morton, stung to the quick, turned indignantly to the speaker, "Sir, if I had my sword you would either take back your words or know what cold steel is."

"Pshaw," was the contemptuous retort, "I don't care for anything in the shape of a Britisher."

"That's so, and you know first-rate how to rile one," exclaimed the presiding officer approvingly. Then addressing Morton, he added, "We ain't afeared of your threats, young man, and won't lose time with you—yes or no, are you going to give evidence?"

"No," answered Morton firmly.

"That will do: withdraw the prisoner."

"Excuse me, Major Spooner," said a voice behind. Morton turned and saw standing by the door an officer whose bearing indicated he was a soldier by profession and not one of a few months' standing. "I came in after the examination had begun and therefore did not take my seat at the board. If you will allow me, I will endeavor to represent to the accused how matters stand."

"Sartainly, Colonel Vanderberg; yer ken try him."

"Then, Mr Morton, the case stands thus: last night one of our men on guard, posted near where you slept, was stabbed and scalped. I need not say, I do not believe for a moment you had any hand in that deed. However, this morning experts were sent to discover the trail of the perpetrator, and they, favored by the softness of the soil, traced the steps of the moccasined feet of an Indian to where the guard stood, thence to your lodging-place and finally from it to the bush whence came the shot that killed one of the patrol.

More than all this, I may tell you the footmarks of the Indian are plain inside the stable and beside the place in it where you slept are marks caused by drops of blood. It is thus beyond all question that the Indian visited you, and, with a view to discovering him and so checking a system of barbarous warfare repulsive to all true soldiers, we ask you to tell us what you know of him—ask you, not under threats or taking advantage of your unfortunate position, but as a gentleman and a soldier to assist us by telling what you know of the mysterious affair.”

Morton bowed to the Colonel and replied he had no hesitation in telling him what he knew, and he recounted briefly how he had been awakened during the night by an Indian and urged to fly with him. He was prepared to take oath that he knew not of his slaying the guard, and the drops of blood upon the straw that formed his bed must have dripped from the scalp as the Indian stooped over him and urged him to accompany him. Morton mentioned no name, and none of his questioners seemed to think he could have known the Indian. At any rate their incredulity of his story, verging on disgust, rendered cross-questioning superfluous, Major Spooner said he could not swallow the yarn, and another officer remarked it would be easier for him to go without his bitters for a month than believe a Britisher would not run away when he had a chance, to which the others agreed.

"What!" exclaimed Morton, "do you think, after giving my word of honor to your General that I would not attempt to escape, that I would do so?"

"That is just what we do think, and that there was something we don't know of that kept you from running away with the Indian."

Morton's anger again rose and he was about to say something rash, when Colonel Vanderberg gave his shoulder a monitory touch. "If none of you object, I will take charge of Mr Morton."

"Yer welkim to the critter," remarked Major Spooner, at which the others expectorated in order to laugh. "He is under sentence of death, and it lies with the General to say when it shall be carried out. If he is willing you should undertake the provost-marshal's duty, this committee of enquiry offer you their congratulations."

To this raillery Colonel Vanderberg said naught, and taking Morton by the arm led him into a vacant room. "Stay here for a minute," he said. On re-entering he grasped Morton by the hand, while he informed him "the General has given me permission to take you with me, and will you ride with me to Fort Hickory?"

"With all my heart," answered Morton, and going to the door found several troopers waiting the Colonel, who pointed to Morton to get on the back of one of three spare horses. He did so and they galloped out of the village.

CHAPTER IX.

MAGGIE was busy with household duties when Hemlock entered and sat down near the table at which she stood.

"All away?" he asked.

"All except mother, who is having her afternoon nap."

Casting a suspicious glance round, the Indian drew something out of his pouch. "Do you know that?"

It was a ring. Maggie examined it and as she recognized whose it was, blushed.

"Is he alive?" she asked, in a low earnest tone, as if fearful that it was a memorial gift.

"Yes; I was with him and spoke to him night before last."

"Where?"

"At Four Corners."

"Tell me all?" entreated Maggie, and Hemlock recounted his visit, closing with the remark, "If he had come with me, he would have been here now."

"But he would have broken his word to the Yankees," urged Maggie in his defence.

"And perhaps they will break his neck," answered

Hemlock with a grunt. "Major Stovin told me that Hampton's answer to his letter was that he could allow no interference from outside in his disposal of spies."

"Morton is not a spy," exclaimed Maggie indignantly.

"They will punish him all the same unless I give myself up," said Hemlock, "and I mean to."

"Oh, Hemlock, they would kill you."

"Maybe, but Indian would save his friend."

"He may get off when our men beat them."

The Indian's lip curled. "The owls are telling the eagles what to do. When the order came to the Indian bands not to fight but just watch, I left. We would have hung to their sides like wasps on a deer, and marked every mile they marched with deeds that would have caused widows to raise the funeral song from Champlain to the Ohio, but our arms are held fast."

"You did not tell me how you came by this ring?" faltered Maggie, as she shyly tried it on her fingers.

"I asked him for a token, and he gave me that."

"A token for whom, Hemlock?"

"For you."

"For me!" gasped Maggie, with beaming eyes, while her color came and went.

Hemlock nodded and said no more. Turning her head away from him, Maggie pressed the token to her lips. On the Indian's rising to go, she en-

treated him to stay. Her brothers were at the camp, but her father was only at the rear end of the lot stooking corn, and he might go and see him. Hemlock, who had the dislike of his race to manual labor, said he would wait, and catching up the fishing-rod of her younger brother, prepared it to beguile the denizens of the river that flowed past the shanty, and continued fishing until the old man returned, who sat down beside Hemlock and got into an engrossing conversation, which was ended by Maggie's calling them to supper. When the meal was fairly under way, the father said:

"Hemlock wants us to leave. He says the Americans will be here in a day or two. He offers to bring Indians with enough of canoes to take you and Maggie to Montreal."

"Leave my hame for thae Yankees!" exclaimed Mrs Forsyth; "no a step will I gang oot o' my way for the deils."

"Hemlock says they may burn down the house and insult you, an' ye wad be better oot o' their way."

"I wad like to see the Yankee loon that wad try to set a low to oor bit biggin; I wad ding some dacency into his heid."

"Think o' Maggie, guid wife."

Before her mother could speak, Maggie declared "she wasna fear't an' wad bide wi' her mither, thankin' Hemlock a' the same."

"You see, Hemlock, hoo wi' Scotch bodies stick

by our hames. Down to the women and bairns, we will fecht to the last gasp to haud them."

Hemlock said nothing and helped himself to another piece of johnny-cake. The subject, however, had excited Mrs Forsyth, who mingled denunciations of the invaders with regrets at leaving Scotland.

"Toots, woman, Canada is a better country for the puir man than Scotlan."

"I am no denyin' that, but eh, there was a couthie security there that's no here, an' for a sicht o' its bonnie howes an' glens I'd gie onything. The first an' the last sicht each day frae my faither's door was the Pentlands, an' no trees, trees, wi' snaw an' ice hauf the year."

"Ye wadna gae back, mither, for a' that."

"Deed would I, gin we a' went the gither."

"But ye have aften tell't me ye wad never cross the sea again, ye were so sick in coming."

"Na, neither I wad; nae boatie for me."

"Then, ye canna gang."

"Hoot, lass, what are ye sayin'; is that a' ye ken? We could walk roun'."

"Providence, dear wife, has cast oor lot here an' it's oor duty to be content. Please God, we will help to mak o' Canada a country oor children will be proud o', an as for thae Yankees, wha come to rob us o' oor liberty, I am sure their conceit will lead to their fa' an' that their designs upon us will come to naething."

Hemlock rose and prepared to leave. "I will go

with you," said Forsyth, "and hear what is the news in the camp."

Getting into the canoe they arrived at the forks in due time, and found great activity in erecting buildings, while carts were arriving every few minutes from the Basin with supplies or leaving empty to reload. In every direction were soldiers encamped, and the evening being cold their fires crackled and blazed along the lines. The soldiers were of all kinds, from habitants in homespun blouses and blue tuques to regulars of the line. The noisiest were the volunteer regiments, composed of young men, lumbermen and city tradesmen, whose exuberant animal spirits the discomforts and privations of camp failed to tame, and where they were, screams, laughter, and singing resounded. Hemlock led the way to a large, white house, the home of an American settler, named Baker, but taken possession of for headquarters, and passing the guard as a privileged character, told the orderly he wanted to see the General. On enquiry, the two visitors were admitted into a good-sized room, in the centre of which was a large table, at which sat a thick-set officer of foreign aspect, Gen. deWatteville, his secretary, and Major Henry, who had succeeded Stovin as local commander. They were evidently engaged in examining regimental reports.

"Hemlock, so you have got back? What news from the lines?" asked the Major.

"Yankees will break camp tomorrow."

"How do you know? Have you any despatches from our spies?"

"No, but I saw a waggon loaded with axes arrive at Fort Hickory."

"Well, what about that?"

"The advance camp, nearest to here, is called Fort Hickory: the axes are to chop a road from there to our outposts on the Chateaugay."

DeWatteville became all attention. "How long would the road be?"

"Three leagues," answered Hemlock.

"Pooh," remarked the General, relapsing into indifference, "they cannot cut a road that long through the woods."

"You don't know Yankee axemen," said Hemlock, "they will do it in a day and turn your flank."

The General simply waved his hand contemptuously. Major Henry, knowing from past acquaintance, Hemlock's worth and intelligence, asked in a respectful tone, "What do you advise?"

"Send me with all the Indians and we will cut them off."

DeWatteville could not withhold a gesture of horror. "You would fall upon these axemen, you say are coming, butcher them with your hatchets and scalp them. Eh?"

"Every one of them," answered Hemlock in an exultant voice.

"Faugh, that is not war; that is murder," said

the General, "we will fight the Americans in no such way."

"It is how they would deal with you," said Hemlock, "but if you do not want the Indian to fight in the way of his fathers, he will leave you."

Henry here leant over and whispered into the General's ear; who answered aloud, "No, I will not hear of it: I will fight as a soldier and will have no savagery." The Major was evidently disconcerted, and changed the subject by asking Hemlock what led him so far from the lines as to visit Fort Hickory.

"I followed Morton."

"Ha!" exclaimed the General, "poor fellow, what of him?"

"They were going to hang him, when Colonel Vanderberg took him from Four Corners."

"You see, General," said Major Henry with a smile, "the savagery of the invader against whom you would not use the services of Hemlock and his braves in self-defence."

The General twirled his heavy grey mustache and bit it nervously. "If they hang him, I will let every redskin in the country loose upon them."

"It would serve Morton better to do so before the rope does its work," suggested the Major. "Our remonstrances addressed to General Hampton have been met with combined equivocation and insolence. 'Give up,' he says, 'the murderer of Major Slocum and I will set Morton at liberty.' As much as to

say we screen the murderer—a man I know nothing of and for whose deed His Majesty's service is not accountable."

Hemlock said, "Read that again?"

Taking up General Hampton's despatch in answer to that regarding Morton's treatment, the Major read it in full. The Indian listened intently and made no comment, but Forsyth said quietly, he was sure Mr Morton had no hand in murdering anybody.

"We all know that," answered Major Henry, "a more humane and yet a more gallant officer the King has not got. And now, Forsyth, what are you and the settlers going to do when the Americans cross the frontier?"

"Ye'll excuse me for saying so, but that is a silly question to ask o' men wha hae gien their sons to serve as sogers and placed their horses, and a' their barns and cellars contain at your service."

"You don't understand me. I mean do you intend staying in your houses should the enemy come, or will you seek safety in Montreal?"

"It wad be hard to gie up to the destroyer all we hae and that we hae gaithered wi' sic pains in years gane by. My ain mind is, and my neebors agree, that we will stand by our property an' tak chances."

"It is the resolve of brave men," remarked the General, "but it may be in the interest of the campaign to waste the country and leave neither supplies nor shelter for the enemy."

"Gin sic should prove the case," answered the farmer, "there's no an Auld Countryman on the river that wadna pit the fire to his biggin wi' his ain hand. Gear is guid, but independence is sweet."

"I hope you will not be asked to make such a sacrifice," said the Major, "we have reports here of reinforcements on the way that, if they arrive in time, will enable us to meet the enemy."

The General here intimated to them to retire. Hemlock started as if from a reverie. Going close to the General, he stretched out his right hand after the manner of Indian orators. "You meet the Yankees as soldier meets soldier. The red man meets them as the robbers of his lands, the destroyers of his villages, the slayers of his race. The land was ours, and they have driven us to the setting sun and left us not even standing-room for our lodges. You have called us savages. Who made us savages? The Indian forgets no kindness and forgives no wrong. The hand that has despoiled and struck at us, we will seek late and early, in light and dark, to smite. Our enemy for generations, the enemy we are always at war with, is your enemy today. You may make peace with him tomorrow. We never will. When the Indian dies, he gives his hatchet to his sons. We offer you our help. Tell me to go and do what I will, and the Americans will not drink of the St Lawrence. Ten score Iroquois will keep up the war-whoop along the frontier until they turn."

The General seemed annoyed and said sharply, "We take you as scouts, not as comrades-in-arms. I will have no barbarian warfare."

Hemlock drew himself up with dignity as he said: "We are your allies, not your hirelings. Our tribes declared war against the Americans before you did, and if you will not accept our aid we withdraw this night from your camp and shall fight on our own hand."

Major Henry perceived the mistake made by the General and hastened to undo it. "King George," he said, "is true to the treaty made with his Indian allies and I am sure you will stand by it too. The General is preparing his plans for receiving the Americans and the Indians will have their place in it."

Without apparently heeding these words, Hemlock approached close to the General. "I warn you," he said, "if you reject our aid, great soldier as you may be across the sea, in the warfare of these woods your light will go out like this," and with a wave of his hand he put out the light of one of the two candles on the table. Turning on his heel, he walked with stately stride out of the room. That night he and his band left the camp and ceased to receive orders from headquarters.

CHAPTER X.

"WELL, Morton, our days of inglorious idleness are ended," exclaimed Col. Vanderberg. "I return from headquarters with orders for an immediate advance."

"Thank heavens!" ejaculated Morton.

"What! Do you rejoice at an attack on your country? Come, my good friend, I see your judgment is overcoming your feelings, and you are going to cast in your lot with us—the latest convert from monarchism to republicanism."

"No, no: you need not banter me. What I rejoice at is the ending of a policy of inaction that has kept you, my friend, and your humble prisoner alike in wearisome suspense."

"It is ended: the die is cast, whatever the result may be. After dinner squads of men begin to chop out a road from Smith's, and tomorrow Izard comes with reinforcements and under him we bear the banner of the United States into Canada."

"And what do you propose doing with me when you advance?" asked Morton.

"Hum! To leave you behind means your being returned to Four Corners, with a chance of meeting

the fate you twice escaped. It is against all military rule, but you must go with us. I will not risk you in the hands of these legal Sons of Mars—Spooner et al.”

“Thank you, Colonel; again you have placed me under an obligation I can never repay.”

“I hope not,” answered the Colonel with a smile, “I’d rather not be His Majesty’s prisoner even with Lieutenant Morton as my custodian.”

“No, never; I wish to pay my debt of gratitude in no such way.”

“Say no more, Morton, on that score. The happiest days I have spent this summer have been since I made your acquaintance. If I did you a good turn, I have had compensation. And now to work: there comes a waggon creaking under its load of chopping axes.”

The conversation took place at an outpost of Hampton’s army, close upon the frontier, styled Douglas camp in official documents but known familiarly among the soldiers as Fort Hickory, from the character of the trees that prevailed at this spot. Colonel Vanderberg, instead of placing Morton in custody as he half anticipated, when he dismounted after his ride from Four Corners, took him into the house where he was quartered, and told him in few words he was again on parole and his guest. Without further allusion to the humiliating and perilous position from which he had snatched him,⁹ Col. Vanderberg made him his friend

and associate and each passing day strengthened the bond between them. Each had experiences of interest to the other. The Colonel had tales of peril on the Pennsylvania and Ohio frontiers in protecting the settlements from Indian attacks, and Morton, in return, gratified his curiosity as to the organization and character of the British army and English life and habits.

The following morning they had breakfast by candle-light, and on going out, found the camp in a flurry of preparation, troopers ready to mount, engineers with their tools over their shoulders, and a large squad of brawny fellows in flannel shirts with axe in hand, drafted from the various corps and hired from among the surrounding farmers to clear a road to the Chateaugay. All was life, bustle, and confusion. Jumping on horseback, the Colonel speedily got each man into his place, and by the time this was effected, the drum-taps, by which they kept step, of Izard's column were heard, and that officer gave the word to advance. Preceded by a squad of scouts and sharpshooters to cover them, the engineers and axemen moved on, then a body of infantry, followed by the troopers, a few commissariat wagons bringing up the rear. The Colonel and Morton were with the troopers. As the long and picturesque cavalcade scrambled over the brow of a hill, the sun had gained the ascendancy, and the frost that had whitened everything now sparkled on every stem and leaf as it

melted in the sunbeams. The atmosphere was clear and crisp, and the very odor that rose from the fallen leaves added to its exhilarating quality. When the summit of the ascent was reached, the declivity was abrupt enough to afford a lookout over the tree-tops, and Canada lay outstretched a vast plain at their feet. Far in the distance, could be seen a gleaming line, like a rapier flung across a brown cloak. It was the St Lawrence. The Colonel drew his horse to one side of the road, to permit the troops to pass, while he scanned the inspiring scene.

"All looks peaceful," he said to Morton, "no sign that under the cover of these woods an enemy awaits us."

"It is a grand view of a noble country," replied Morton, "and you may rely on it, there are men awaiting you who will shed the last drop of their blood in its defence."

The Colonel, drawing his bridle, joined in the march and the glimpse of Canada was lost under overhanging vistas of trees. "Do you know, Morton," he said, "it seems strange to me that our armies should meet resistance from the Canadians. We speak the same language; we are of the same stock. Why should they fight to the death against uniting with us as equal partners in a free government?"

"You forget, Colonel, that speech and origin are not the strongest elements in national sentiment.

You meet a woman with a big man supporting her and bearing himself as if he were proud of her, and you wonder at it, and say the man could find plenty whose faces are pleasanter to look upon and which indicate more intelligence. The man will admit all that, but he tells you the woman is his mother, and to him she is better and more beautiful than all the women in the world beside. In the same way, the British government may be inferior in some points to your new Republic, may have made mistakes in the past, and might be better in some regards, but then she is the mother of the Canadians, and they will not desert her for bouncing Miss Columbia."

"That won't do, Morton; you forget that the British government was once, as you term it, our mother also."

"I did not forget that, and I hope I will not offend you, Colonel, by saying that for that very cause the Canadians dislike Americans. You turned upon your mother, you strove to compass her humiliation; the very base of your patriotic feeling is hatred of her."

"That is putting it strong, Morton."

"I think not; the preamble of your declaration of independence is a tirade of gratuitous charges against Great Britain."

"Then you think Canada will never unite with the Republic?"

"I certainly think so, and those who live to see

it, will find two great English-speaking communities on this continent, with this radical difference between them, that one reviles and seeks to injure the mother-land from which they sprung and the other succors and honors her."

A commotion in front stopped the conversation and two scouts were seen dragging an old man between them towards the Colonel.

"What's this?" he asked sharply.

"We have taken a prisoner!" cried one of the men in an exulting voice.

"The devil take you," interrupted the old man with contentious manner. "Yees had no business wid me."

"We found him hiding behind some brush watching our men. He is a spy," said the scout.

"Behind some brush! An' whose brush was it? Me own, bedad."

"You had no business there."

"No business to be on my own farrum! Bad scran to ye, if I had yees in Wixford I'd get the constable to arrist every man o' yees for trispass."

"Come, hold your tongue," said a scout roughly.

"Hould yer own whisht. Ye havn't mended yer manners since I saw yer backs at Brandywine."

Col. Vanderberg smiled as he said to the scouts, "I am afraid you have been too hasty. We are now in Canada and must not molest its inhabitants. The old man is a non-combatant, and, as he declares, was on his own farm when taken."

"If you had seen him kick and scratch and wriggle when we put hands upon him, you wouldn't say he was a non-combatant, Colonel. He swore at the United States and said he kept one of our flags for his pocket-handkerchief."

"Tut, tut," exclaimed the Colonel, "we have not come to fight old men; let him go."

"Ye'd betther," remarked the old man with a grin, "or I'll make ye sorry."

"Now, what could you do?" asked the Colonel with an amused smile.

The old man sidled up beside the bridle of the Colonel's horse, and in a tone of mock solemnity, while his eyes sparkled with fun, whispered, "I'd put the curse of Cramwell an ye."

"Say, friend," said Morton, "there is something about you that tells me you are an old soldier. Were you ever in the army?"

"Yis, but not in yer riffraff that ye's call an army."

"You are mistaken in me," replied Morton, and drawing aside his cloak showed the scarlet coat of the British service.

"An' how did ye fall in wid dem rebels? A prisoner are ye, God save us! You'll be Lieutenant Morton that was to be hanged, as I heard tell. Well, well, since ye wern't born to be hanged, it is drowned ye may be. Av coorse I was in the army an' got me discharge an' a grant of land from King George, an' may the divil catch a hould o' dem that don't wish him well."

"Are all your neighbors of the same mind?" asked the Colonel.

"They are that same. Come wid me to my shanty an' while I sind for 'im, you will have an illigant dinner of praties an' milk. There is not wan on the frontier that does not say with Capt. Barron, God bless the King an' canfound his inimies."

"Thank you," answered the Colonel, "but I have other fish to fry today. Tell me this, old man, What difference would it make to you and your neighbors that you should eat your potatoes and milk under the Stars and Stripes instead of the Union Jack?"

"Sure, that's aisy answered. The differ between atin' in an inimy's house an' aitin' in yer awn."

"Come, Morton, we lose time. Good - bye, old man," and putting spurs to his horse the Colonel galloped to regain his place in the column, followed by Morton.

By noon the scouts had reached the Chateaugay, which they forded without hesitation and advancing on a shanty that stood on the bank, surprised its inmates, a party of Canadian volunteers on outpost duty, while taking an afternoon nap. This capture was of advantage to the Americans, for it delayed by several hours intelligence of their invasion being received at the British headquarters. Shortly afterwards Col. Vanderberg arrived, who, without halting for refreshment, accompanied Gen. Izard down the river some distance, examining the

country. On returning, men were set to work to prepare a camp for the main army, which he knew was on the march. A thorough soldier, well trained in bush fighting, the Colonel made his arrangements with an acumen and decision that increased Morton's regard for him. Before sunset a line of scouts was established across the valley, a strongly fortified post established, tents pitched, and a messenger sent with a despatch to Hampton informing him all was ready. Not until then, did the Colonel divest himself of his long-boots and draw up beside the log-fire of the shanty of one Spears to discuss the fare his servant had provided.

CHAPTER XI.

ON the morning after the events narrated in preceding chapter, General Hampton left his quarters at Four Corners for the new camp. Escorted by 20 cavalrymen, he and his staff rode rapidly over the newly-cut road, and by noon reached the Chateaugay. Halting on the bluff that overlooks the junction of the Outard with that river, and whence he had full view of the camp in busy preparation on the other side of the river, he awaited the arrival of his tents. A stout man and well-advanced in years, the exertion of the journey had fatigued him, and he sat, or rather reclined, on a log in front of a blazing fire, for the day was chilly, and grouped around him were the officers of his staff. At the foot of the bank and in the near distance, were the troopers tending their horses and the officers' servants preparing dinner.

From his elevated position, the General had a full view of the opposite bank and he watched with complacency the arrival at the new camp, with flutter of flag and tuck of drum, of frequent detachments.

"Everything bodes favorably for our enterprise,"

he remarked, "the despatches that awaited me tell of unprecedented success. At every point attempted our battalions have entered the enemy's territory unopposed and advanced unmolested. The Rubicon has been crossed and terror-stricken the foe flies before us. This afternoon a special messenger shall bear to Albany, New York and Washington the tidings of our triumphant progress—of our undisputed taking possession of this country to which the British authorities make a pretended claim."

"Your despatch will cause great rejoicing," said an officer.

"Yes, it will be hailed with loud acclaim, and my enemies who clamored against me, will now perceive that what they stigmatized as inaction was the profoundest strategy. Sixteen miles have we marched into the enemy's territory and not a hostile bayonet has been seen. Ha, who is this? Draw your swords."

All eyes turned in the direction of the General's, and a tall Indian was seen standing immovably beside a giant pine. It was Hemlock. As he remained motionless with folded arms, and was apparently unarmed, the officers got over their alarm, and those who had laid their hands upon their swords, dropped them.

"Sirrah, what do you here? How passed you our guards?" shouted the General.

"I have come to speak with you. You are ten

to one; your escort is within hail of you, will you listen to me?"

"Go on," said Hampton.

"You have a British officer held as prisoner. You wrote to Major Stovin that you would set him free if the Indian who killed Slocum were given in exchange. Do you stand by that offer?"

"Morton goes free when the Indian is sent in."

"Give me an order for his release; the Indian goes to your camp at once."

"That will not do, Mr Redskin. The exchange must be effected through the British commander. Let him send an accredited officer with a flag of truce and we will treat with him."

"Before that can be done, Morton may be dead. If you get the Indian what care you for else? The Indian who killed Slocum passes into your hands the moment Morton is given liberty."

"This is altogether irregular," remarked an officer, "General Hampton cannot deal with an irresponsible redskin, who, for all he knows, has come here on some scheme of deviltry. See here, was it you that murdered Slocum?"

"I never murdered any man," answered Hemlock proudly, "but I have killed many in war. Had you the Indian who slew him, what would you do to him?"

"Well, I guess, if the General let us have our way, we would hand him to the men of Slocum's old regiment and they'd make him wish he had never been born."

"The Indian might have had good cause for dealing with Slocum as he did?"

"No, you red devil, he could have no cause. He carved him up out of pure deviltry."

"You are tired, General," said Hemlock, with a courteous wave of the hand, "and while you rest, will you listen to me, for I have heard that Indian's story? In the Mohawk valley lived an English family when you Americans rose against King George. A neighbor, who had come from Massachusetts, envied their farm, and, on the Englishman refusing to forswear his allegiance, had it confiscated and took possession. The Englishman had to fly and went through the woods, many days' journey to Canada, guided by a band of loyal Oneidas. When they reached Canada, a young warrior of that band stayed with them and helped them to find food in the wilderness until crops grew. That Indian gave up his tribe, and lived with them and a daughter came to love him, and they were married and were happy many years, until the mist rose from the lake and she sickened and died. The Indian so loved her that he would have killed himself to follow her to the spirit land, had she not left a daughter, who was his joy and life. When she grew up, the Indian said, She shall be the equal of the best, and he took her to Albany to be taught all ladies learn. A young man saw her, met her, learned of the Indian blood in her veins, and doomed her as his

spoil. He was aided by a companion in deceiving her by a false marriage, she lived with him for a while, was cast off, and her deceiver married the governor's daughter. The Indian had gone on a far journey; he went to seek for furs in the West to get money for his daughter. In two years he came to Montreal with many canoe-loads, he sold them, he went to Albany, and found his child dying of a broken heart. He took her away with him, he nursed her by the Ottawa—he buried her there. He went back to Albany, and was told the law could not punish Slocum or his friend, who had gone away. Then he sought Slocum and twenty times he could have killed him, but he would not. In his heart he said, Slocum must die not by the knife or bullet, but by torture, and the chance came not until a moon ago, when he met Slocum face to face in the Chateaugay woods about to stab Morton. The Indian took Slocum, and for hours he made him feel part of the pain he had caused him and his child—only a part, for you who are fathers can guess what that Indian and his daughter suffered. Was that Indian to blame? Did he do more to him than he deserved? Will you give the father over to Slocum's soldiers to be abused and killed?"

"A good yarn," remarked an officer, "and a true one, for I lived at Albany then and saw the girl; pretty as a picture and simple as a baby. If Major Slocum had not got his hand in first, some other

fellow would and she would have been made a fool of anyway."

"We will have nigger fathers running after us next," sneered another officer.

"Did you know Slocum?" asked Hemlock of the first who had spoken, with a quaver in his voice he could not control.

"Guess I did. Slocum and Spooner were chums in those days, and by ——, I believe you are the father of the young squaw you make such a bother about. Won't we hold him, General?" So saying he rose, as if waiting his assent to seize Hemlock. Before he could take a second step, Hemlock, with a quick motion, snatched his tomahawk, which he had concealed in his bosom, threw it, and leapt into the bush, where he was lost to sight in a moment. The officer, without uttering a word, fell on his back; the head of the tomahawk buried in his forehead. Stunned by the event, the officers lost a few minutes in giving the alarm. When search was made, it was in vain; Hemlock had not left a trace behind him.

* * * * *

The evening set in dismal and rainy, with a raw east wind that made the soldiers seek every available shelter. In the Forsyth household there was the alarm natural to the knowledge that the invaders were within a short distance, but the daily routine of duty was not interrupted and everything had gone on as usual. All had retired to rest ex-

cept Maggie, who sat before the fire, building castles in the flickering flames and dying embers. While so engaged, the door, never fastened, opened softly, and Hemlock stepped in. Regardless of his sodden garments, he crouched beside the girl, without uttering a word. "Do you bring news of the coming of the enemy?" she whispered.

"No: they are shivering in their tents."

"It is a cruel night to be out of doors."

The Indian nodded assent, and relapsed into silence. "Maggie," he said suddenly, "I may have to leave Morton to your care."

"Dear me, Hemlock, what can I do?"

"I have done everything," he went on to say, "that I could. I gave him a chance to escape from his prison and today I offered Hampton to surrender the Indian they want in exchange for him and he refused. He will treat with the British General alone."

"That is surely easy, Hemlock. When the Yankees say they will give up Mr Morton for the Indian they blame for murdering their officer, our General will be glad to give up the Indian, provided he can be got."

"No: our General refuses, saying it would be an unheard of thing for the British to give up an ally for an act of warfare, and he will not listen to the Yankee demand."

"May be he says that because he cannot get the Indian," suggested Maggie.

"I am the Indian," said Hemlock curtly, "and I asked him to bind me and send me to the American camp with a flag of truce, and all he said was, 'He would sooner hear of Morton being hung than be guilty of such treachery to a faithful ally.'"

"My, Hemlock! What made you be so cruel? That you have a feeling heart I know, for I have seen you cry over your daughter's——"

With a quick gesture Hemlock stopped her.

"Speak no more of that. It was because of my love for my child that I tortured the wretch to death." Here he paused, his features working with emotions that cast them into frightful contortions. "Oh, Maggie, I thought if I could have my revenge I'd be happy. I had my heart's wish on the spoiler of my child and today I brained the villain that helped him, and I am more miserable than ever. My vengeance has done me no good. My child, my daughter, oh come to me!"

The heart of Maggie melted with sympathy. She rose and resting one hand on his shoulder sought his with the other. "Take it not," he said in a whisper, "it is the hand of blood."

"Hemlock, I dinna judge you as I would ane o' oor ain folk, for the nature born with you is no like oors, let alane your upbringing, but I ken you to be an honest, and wronged man, with a kindly heart, and I would share your sorrow that I may lichten it."

The Indian was evidently touched. Grasping her

hand he bent over it and pressed it to his lips. After a long pause, Maggie added: "If you would give up your heathen ways and turn to the Lord, your path would become clear."

"I once followed the Lord," said Hemlock, "I learned of Him from my wife, and I taught my daughter to love Jesus, but when the cloud came and its darkness blinded me, I put away the white man's God and went back to the ways of my fathers."

"Leave them again?" entreated Maggie.

"Too late: I die as I am."

"But you are no going to die, Hemlock. You've many years to live."

"I die before the new moon comes; my oki told me so in a dream last night, and that is why I have come to talk with you about Morton. You love him?"

Too honest to utter the "no" that came to her faltering tongue, Maggie's head drooped and her face flushed.

"I know you do," Hemlock went on, "and I know he loves you, tho' his heart has not told his head yet. I know not where he is; if I did, we would attack his guard and rescue him this night. They took him away from Fort Hickory and I have not got his track yet. When they find where he is I want you to give orders to my men when I am gone."

"This is beyond me, Hemlock."

"Listen: I have told my Indians they must save him and to obey you."

"Tell my brothers or my father."

"The Indians would not obey them: they believe what I told them, that I have given you my medicine. If Morton is not saved this week, he dies."

"If our men beat the Yankees will they not rescue him?"

"Yankees would shoot him before they would let him escape, and they will hang him if they retreat. They have let him live hoping to get me; when they know they cannot, they will kill him."

Maggie shuddered. "And what am I to do?"

Hemlock answered: "The Indian has a good hand but a poor head. When they come and tell you they have found where Morton is kept, you will order them when and how to make the attack and into the messenger's hand you will press this medicine, and tell him it will make success sure." Here he took a pouch from his breast and selected a small package—something sewed up in a bit of bird's skin.

"I hope you will live to save your friend yourself," said Maggie.

Hemlock gloomily shook his head, and rising walked towards the door, which he opened and stepped out into the cheerless night. Maggie followed and looked out. She could see nothing: he was gone. That night she rested all the more comfortably, from knowing that within hail was a faithful band of Indians.

CHAPTER XII.

Two days later Hemlock was one of a group standing on the north bank of the river, where it broke into a short rapid, named from the settler whose shanty overlooked it, Morrison's rapid. The group included representatives of the different corps that had been gathered together, with several settlers. They were watching, in the fading twilight, a thin line of moving red, emerging from the bush. It was a battalion of the Canadian Fencibles that had come from Kingston to reinforce deWatteville. The newcomers were soon among them, brawny Highlanders from Glengarry, French Canadian lumbermen, and a number of farmers from the English settlements in the east. They were greeted with the earnestness men in peril welcome help, and assistance was given in preparing such food as was available, while many sought rest after their exhausting journey in the outbuildings of Morrison and in the sheds that had been prepared for them. Their commander, Col. Macdonell, a thin, wiry man, with a fair complexion that gave him the name of Macdonell the Red, having seen his men disposed of, moved to the house. At the door Morrison,

himself a Highlander, bade his guest welcome in the purest of Argyllshire Gaelic, and produced his bottle. After the glass had passed round, Macdonell said, "We have come far to have a tilt with the Yankees: will we be sure to meet them?"

"That you will," answered Morrison, "they are within four miles of you and will pay us a visit, maybe, the morn."

"Ha! That news does me more good than your dram. When there is fighting to be done, a Highlandman's blood runs faster. Get us some supper ready, and while we wait I'll find out what has been done. Is there none of the General's staff here?"

"Not an officer: they are all busy at the making of barricades; but here is an Indian with a longer head than any of them, and who can speak good English, which, however, is not to be compared with our mother-language."

Resuming the use of the despised tongue—for he scorned to give English the name of language—Morrison introduced Hemlock, and drawing him to a corner of the hearth, Macdonell plied him with questions. The Indian, using the ramrod of his musket, drew a plan of the country in the ashes at their feet, explaining how the Americans were encamped a few miles farther up the river and that to get to Montreal they must go down the road that followed its north bank. To prevent him, General deWatteville had caused the numerous

gullies of creeks where they emptied into the Chateaugay, to be protected by breastworks of fallen trees, behind which the British would contest their advance. Six of these gullies had been so prepared. In rear of them, was the main line of defence, placed where the ground was favorable, and strengthened by breastworks and two small cannon.

"Aye, aye!" exclaimed Macdonell, "all very well if the Americans keep to the road: but what are we to do should they try to flank us?"

The Indian's face darkened as he whispered, "de Watteville is a good man but he is an Old World soldier who knows nothing about bush-fighting. He would not believe me, when I told them there were bush-whackers in the Yankee army who could march to his rear through the woods."

"That they could!" agreed the Colonel, "and where would he be then? And what good would his six lines of barricades be? My own lads today came over ground where regulars would have been bogged. Then the river can be forded opposite this house. Could the Yankees get to this ford?"

Hemlock said they could, when Macdonell answered he would see to it that preparations were made to checkmate such a move. Finding Hemlock acute and thoroughly acquainted with the field of operations, the Highlander's heart warmed to him as one of like soldierly instincts as his own. Uncontaminated by the prejudice of race common

to old residents, he had no feeling against the red-men, and when supper was ready he insisted on Hemlock's sitting beside him, and in treating him as his equal. As the evening wore on, officers from the neighboring encampments dropped in to exchange greetings with the new-comers, and an orderly brought instructions from the General. When Hemlock left to join his band in their vigils along the enemy's lines, he felt he had not passed so happy an evening for a dozen of years.

The night passed quietly and in the morning the enemy showed no disposition to move, so that the preparations for their reception went on, and the troops worked all day, the woods re-echoing the sound of their axes as they felled trees to roll into heaps to form rude breastworks. In the afternoon General de Watteville rode up and carefully inspected all that had been done, and returned to his quarters satisfied, and altogether unwitting that the attack was to be made from another direction in a few hours.

The day had been cloudy, cheerless, and cold, and as it faded, rain began to fall. The men sought such cover and warmth as they could find and the officers assembled to spend the night in carousing. So raw, dark, and uninviting was it that not one in the British camp supposed the enemy would be astir. But they were. At sunset, 1500 men left the American camp, marched down to the river, forded the rapids, and began their

march down the south bank with the intent of capturing the ford at Morrison's at daylight.

Next morning, the eventful 26th October, 1813, the Forsyths, unsuspecting of what was passing under the woods around them, were at breakfast, when the door was dashed in and Hemlock appeared, dripping wet. "I want a messenger to go to Macdonell to tell him the Americans are on their way to him," he shouted.

"Confound them," exclaimed Forsyth, "I'll gang at ance."

"An' leave us twa women bodies oor lane?" complained his wife, "No, no, you maun bide, an' proteck us."

Hemlock was disconcerted. "Maggie," he appealed, "won't you go? Take the canoe and you will be at the ford in a few minutes."

"Yes," she responded, with quiet decision, "and what am I to say?"

"Tell the Colonel that the Americans in strength are marching through the woods on this side of the river, intending to surprise him and capture his position. Their advance will be on him in half an hour. Say to him, to send over men to meet them and I will join with my band. I go to watch them." Without another word, he left and rushed back into the forest.

Maggie stepped lightly to where the canoe was moored, loosened the rope, and paddled down the river with all the strength she had. When it

struck the bank at Morrison's she was glad to see so many astir and hastened to the door. "You, Maggie, at this early hour," cried Mrs Morrison, "naething wrang I hope?"

"I must see the Colonel," she said, catching for breath.

"There he is," said Mrs Morrison, pointing to an officer engaged in reading a letter by the fire.

Maggie repeated Hemlock's message. Macdonell listened with sparkling eyes, and when she had done said, "Thank you, my bonnie lass, you have done the King a service, and when the Yankees come they will find us ready to gie their lang nebs a smell o' oor claymores."

Hastening out, he gave his orders in quick succession, and with surprising alacrity for a volunteer force, the men fell in. Two companies were soon complete. "Now, Captain Bruyère, if your men do as well as you will yourself all will be well; and for you, Captain Daly, I know by long experience what a loyal Irishman is. Hold your ground until I get up to you with the other companies."

The men quietly descended the bank and plunged into the river, which took them nearly to the middle, for owing to the recent rains it was deep. Gaining the opposite bank, they were swallowed up in the woods. Gazing over the tree-tops, which looked peaceful in the calm of a dull, moist, autumnal day, Maggie wondered what was going on beneath their cover—wished she could see the advancing Ameri-

cans and the men who had just gone to meet them. There was an interval of suspense. Then, suddenly, there was a sharp volley and the quiet air became filled with shouts, and yells, and cries of frightened men. All at once there burst from the bush on to the river bank, a good way up, a string of habitants, flying in terror, their blue tuques streaming behind them, and few of them having muskets, for they had thrown them away to aid their flight. "The cowardly loons," muttered Macdonell, "it would serve them right to give them a taste of shot." On reaching the ford, they tumultuously dashed in. As the foremost came up the bank the Colonel demanded an explanation. They had been surprised by the unexpected appearance of a great host of Americans and ran to save themselves. Attention, however, was now attracted from the fugitives by the recommencement of the firing, which was sharp and continuous, relieved by the yells and whoops of the Indians.

"Hasten!" shouted Macdonell to the troops who were lining up, "do you not hear the firing? Our comrades need us."

The head of the column had reached the water's edge, when there was a burst of cheering. "That's our lads," said the Colonel, "they must have won the day. Halt! We will not seek to share the credit of their victory." In a few minutes a body of the Fencibles reappeared, with several prisoners and bearing a few wounded men. Their report

was that they had encountered the advance guard of the American brigade, which, although elated at the rout of the outpost of habitants, fled at the first fire. The Colonel ordered the men to retire and wait behind the breastworks that commanded the ford. "It is not likely," he remarked to his adjutant, "that the Americans will now attack us, seeing their design to surprise us has miscarried." Half an hour later, Hemlock arrived with his braves, at whose girdles hung several fresh scalps. He told Macdonell that the Americans had given up their intention of gaining the ford and had gone into camp nearly two miles above, in a grove beside the river. Seeing how slight was the prospect of more fighting on that side of the river, he was going to join the main-body. On hearing this reassuring news, Maggie slipped away to her canoe and paddled homewards.

On coming in sight of the shanty she was amazed and alarmed by the change that had taken place in her short absence. American soldiers were clustered around it, and a few horses picketed. Fearing the worst, she drew near. Seated by the fire were several officers warming themselves and drying their clothes, and with whom her mother was in altercation.

"Come to free us, say ye? What wad ye free us frae?"

"From the tyranny of European monarchy," answered an officer with a smile.

"It maun be a licht yoke that we never felt. Mak us free, dootless, like that blackamoor servant that's cooking yer breakfast."

"Waal, no," said another officer, "yer a furriner, ye know, but yer white."

"A foreigner!" exclaimed Mrs Forsyth, "hae I lived to be ca'ed in my ain house, a foreigner! I belang to nae sic trash. Manners maun be scarce whaur you come frae, my man."

"That's all right, old woman; the old man will understand how it is. We have come to make you independent."

"Auld man! Auld woman! God forgie you for haein' nae respeck for grey hairs. My guid man, sir, taks nae stock in ye or your fine words. Nicht and mornin' does he pray for King George an' that his throne may be preserved. You're a set o' land-louppers, wha hae nae business here an' its my howp afore nicht you may be fleein' back to whaur ye cam frae."

"Canada folk are not all like you."

"Ay, that they are. There's no an' Auld Country family from here to the Basin that winna gie you the back o' their hand, an' no ane that wadna suner lose a' than come unner yer rule."

Afraid that further controversy might result unpleasantly, Maggie left her attitude of listening outside the door and entered. One or two of the younger officers rose and bowed; the others stared.

"Oh, Maggie, I wish you had stayed where you were," said her mother, "you have come into the lion's den, for your father is no maister here."

"I am sure, mother, these gentlemen will not harm us."

"Not at all," interrupted one of the strangers, "and in a few hours we will leave you alone again."

"The sicht o' your backs will be maist welcome," remarked Mrs Forsyth.

"Where is father?"

"Helpin' thae Yankees to get a haud o' his ain property. They took him oot to get fodder for their horses."

There was a bustle outside and presently two soldiers carried in a young lad, in lieutenant's uniform, whose white face told that he had been wounded. They were about to lay him down in front of the fire, when Mrs Forsyth darted forward: "No, na; dinna pit the puir chiel on the floor; tak him to my ain bed," and she helped to place him there. Two surgeons took off his coat and shirt, when the wound appeared; a bullet had gone through the fleshy part beneath the arm-pit, causing some loss of blood without doing serious injury. When the surgeons said he would recover, Mrs Forsyth's face beamed and she bustled about to get the requisites needed to clean and dress the wound, while, under her orders, Maggie made gruel to revive his strength. While thus engaged, officers came and went, and the house was never without

several of them. There came a tall, square-built man, whose shoulder-straps indicated high rank, and his quiet, resolute face one accustomed to command. He advanced to the bed where the wounded lad lay, asked a few questions, and spoke encouragingly to the sufferer.

"It is too bad that Dingley, of all our corps, should have had this luck," remarked an officer.

"Yes, and to no purpose. I fear the miscarriage of our plan to surprise the ford will lead to the abandonment of the purpose to capture Montreal."

"There is not a man in the army that does not wish we were in winter-quarters. To fight in such a country at this season is more than flesh and blood can stand."

"Yet to go back will disgrace us," said the superior officer, who withdrew.

"Who is that?" asked Maggie of one of the surgeons.

"That is Col. Purdy, and if he had been in command we would not have spent all summer doing nothing and come here in the end of October."

"Yet he failed in capturing the ford," remarked Maggie, with a sparkle in her eye.

"He could not help the weather and the dark night that kept us standing in the woods until daybreak. After all, we would have surprised the guard and taken the ford had it not been for somebody, perhaps a traitor among ourselves, who carried word of our coming."

"Maybe," said Maggie demurely, "but you did not get the ford and what can you do now?"

"Nothing, I am afraid. The failure of our brigade to carry the key of the enemy's position may cause the General to give up the enterprise."

CHAPTER XIII.

ON leaving Morrison's, Hemlock hurried to the front, followed by his braves. As he reached each successive line of defence he paused briefly to scan it, but when he came to that which had been entrusted to the Indians, and which was within sight of the front, he halted to fraternize with his brethren and share their fare, for it was now noon. The urgent requests of the chiefs, that he should stay with them and aid in the threatened conflict, he declined, saying he wanted to be with the first line, and his dusky comrades afterwards recalled that he parted with more than usual ceremony and that when he and his small band gained the eminence on the other side of the ravine, he looked back and waved his hand in farewell. A tramp of a few minutes brought him to the advance line, where he found men still busy felling and rolling trees to strengthen the abattis. Inquiring for the officer in command he came upon him, a short, broad-shouldered man, engaged in swearing at one of his men for neglect of duty. On seeing the Indians he turned, and with hearty gesture grasped Hemlock's extended hand. "Ha, bon camarado, have you come to help?"

"Will there be a fight?" asked Hemlock.

"Yes, yes; stand on this stump and you can see for yourself."

With cautious movement Hemlock scanned the scene. In front of the abattis there was a narrow clearing that skirted the river bank as far as the view extended. On the road and adjoining fields were masses of American troops, with the smoke rising from the fires at which they were cooking dinner. "You see, Hemlock," said Colonel deSala-berry, "they may make an attack any minute. Those mounted officers looking at us from the road are the General and his staff."

Hemlock gave a grunt of satisfaction. "Where will we stand?" he asked.

"Get into the woods and cover our flank," deSala-berry replied. Without another word, Hemlock motioned to his men and led the way to where the line of defence ended in the bush. Here he spread out his men and awaited the onset. Half an hour passed when the roll of drums was heard, and Hemlock saw a brigade falling into rank on the road. When all were in place, the column moved slowly, for the road was a canal of mud intersected by pools of water. As they approached with in range the order to deploy was shouted, and the men streamed on to the clearing until a line the length of the field was formed. Then they faced round, and Hemlock heard the command to advance, when the Americans came on, a solid wall

of humanity, moving with slow and steady step. Instantly, the bushy abattis, behind which the British lay, silent as the grave until now, became alive with the puffs of musket-shots and the shouts of those who fired them. On the Americans came with even step until well within blank range, when they were halted and the order given to fire by platoons. The regular roll of musketry that ensued spoke well for their nerve and discipline. The shower of bullets they sent streaming into the bush in front of them had no effect in checking the opposing fire, which was irregular but lively. It soon became apparent that firing by platoons was a waste of ammunition, a mere flinging of bullets into the tree-tops, and there was a movement in the companies in the column next the woods, which were swung forward, in order that they might gain a position which would enable them to pour a cross-fire into the British position. The men moved steadily, all the while pouring in volleys, that caused the defenders of the upper end of the British line to leave and go lower down. It was a critical moment. The British line was in danger of being flanked, and Hemlock saw its peril. He with his band were concealed in the woods that edged the clearing, and so far had not fired a shot, for Hemlock, who knew the futility of irregular troops engaging in a musketry duel with a disciplined force, had determined not to show where they were until the Americans came to close quar-

ters. Now he saw his opportunity. Signing to his men to follow, he stealthily crept until he was close behind the American companies that were edging to flank the British line. When near upon the unsuspecting Americans, he sprang to his feet, gave the war-whoop, and fired his musket, his followers doing likewise. The Americans looked round in terrified astonishment, and saw the Indians leaping towards them with ear-piercing yells and brandishing their tomahawks. They wavered, broke rank, and fled towards their supports, who were a short distance behind. Hemlock bounded among the fleeing men and two had fallen under his hand, when a volley of bullets from the supporting column came shrieking through the air. All save one passed harmlessly over the heads of the red-men—that one struck Hemlock in the breast, and he sank upon his right knee. Alarmed at his fall, his men desisted from following the fleeing enemy, and seizing hold of him hurried into the shelter of the woods. They laid him down and were about to loosen his jacket, for he was in a faint, when there rose a burst of cheering from the British line, on seeing the success of the Indians' diversion. The sound caught the ear of the dying chief. His eyes opened as from slumber, rolled wildly for a moment, and his breast heaved convulsively. He staggered to his feet, and lifting aloft his tomahawk, dripping with the blood of its last victim, he raised the war-whoop, suddenly stopped short,

rolled unsteadily, and then fell as a pine-tree falls. An Indian knelt down beside him and raised his head while he pressed his hand on his forehead. There was no responsive throb. Hemlock was dead.

* * * * *

"I would swear that was Hemlock's whoop," said Morton to himself. He stood amid a group of cavalrymen who were watching intently what was going on from a field within easy view. He had followed the engagement with intelligent interest; had noted how the American infantry had advanced, deployed, formed line, and opened fire on the British position. What followed provoked him. When he saw how ineffectual the British fire was upon the American ranks, though standing in the open and within easy range, he ground his teeth in vexation. "Those militiamen could not hit a barn; a hundred regulars would have decimated the American column with half the ammunition that has been spent," he muttered to himself. When the upper end of the American line swung forward, his thoughts changed. "Ah, they are going to fix bayonets and carry our position by assault. God help our lads." He was mistaken; the movement was to gain a point whence to rake the British position with an enfilading fire. As he saw the Americans move forward unopposed and the British fire slacken from the bush opposite, his heart sank. "The day is lost: in five minutes the Americans will have possession of the far end of

that bushy entrenchment, and it will be untenable." Suddenly the war-whoop of the Indians was heard, then came their wild assault, and the flight of the Americans. "Well done, Hemlock!" exulted Morton, "no other lungs than yours could have raised that shriek and your timely move has certainly checked the attempt to flank the British position. What next?" Having ascertained so unpleasantly that the wood to their left was held by Indians, the Americans did not try again to turn the British position, and the companies that had broken in disorder were reformed and placed in rear, while the battalions in line continued to pour volleys into the bush heaps in front of them. Hampton and his staff were on horseback, watching the progress of the contest from a bit of rising ground by the river. At this juncture Morton observed him signal with his hand to some one on the other side of the river, and from that quarter, soon after, came the rattle of musketry. It did not last long and when it died away, an orderly was detached from the General's staff and came galloping to deliver a message to Izard, who instantly gave the order to cease firing. The column fell back a few paces and the men stood in rank, awaiting orders. To Morton's surprise, firing from the British line also ceased, and the two combatants simply looked at one another. "Can it be," asked Morton, "that our General does not want to provoke an engagement and would be content to see the Americans leave?" The brief

October day was drawing to an end, and still the American brigade stood immovable and there was not a sign of life along the British line. When the grey clouds began to be tinged by the setting sun, and it was apparent nothing more could be done that day, Izard received the order to fall back. As if on parade, the evolutions requisite were gone through and the column began its march to the camp, three miles in rear.

"Hillo, Morton, you seem stupefied. Lost in amaze at the gallantry of your comrades-in-arms permitting a brigade to file off under their nose without an attempt to molest them. Eh?" The voice was that of Colonel Vanderberg.

"I confess you interpret my thoughts," answered Morton. "I am glad to see you back."

"I have had a fatiguing day's duty and am not yet done. I have just left the General, who instructed me to go over and see Purdy and arrange for the withdrawal of his force. Will you come with me?"

"That I will; I am tired of standing here."

As they approached the river, Morton noted that the bank was strongly picketted by infantry and that a body of cavalry were bivouaced in a field beside the road. Stepping upon a raft that had been extemporized to form a ferry with the other side, the Colonel and Morton were landed in the midst of Purdy's men, who were making themselves as comfortable as possible before their camp-

fires. They looked tired and dejected. The Colonel was told Purdy had gone to remain until morning with his outposts, as a night attack upon them was looked for. Accompanied by a soldier to show them the way they went on, now floundering thru' marshy spots and again jumping little creeks, alternating with bits of dry bank and scrubby brush, until they emerged into a clearing. Morton caught his breath with astonishment. In front was the shanty of the Forsyths! He had had no idea it was so near. The door was open and he could see it was full of officers. Around the house were resting a strong body of troops. Col. Vanderberg pushed in and was soon in earnest conversation with Purdy, who sat smoking by the fire. Morton remained at the door and scanned the interior, which was filled by a cloud of tobacco-smoke and reeked with the odor of cooking and of steaming wet clothes. In the corner, where the bed stood, he saw Maggie leaning over a recumbent youth, whose white face and bandaged shoulder told of a wound. Morton's heart jumped at sight of her and his lips twitched. The next moment, as he saw how gently she soothed the sufferer, a pang of jealousy succeeded, and he clenched his teeth. Pulling his cloak more tightly around him he entered and drew up behind Colonel Vanderberg, who was saying, "Then I am to tell the General from you, that you will not join him tonight."

"Yes, tell him I cannot; that the river is too deep

to ford and too wide to bridge and that it is out of the question to cross 1500 men on rafts. At daylight we will march back the way we came and join him at Spears."

"It will be an unwelcome message, for he counted on your rejoining him tonight."

"I care not," bluffly retorted Purdy, "I am a soldier and know a soldier's duty and have to think of those under me. I'll risk no lives to humor his whims."

"He fears a night assault upon your brigade."

"So do I," replied Purdy, blowing a cloud of tobacco smoke, "and would fear it more if assailed while on the march through these woods or in the endeavor to cross the river. The General should have ordered us to retire while there was daylight."

"Ah, well, I have delivered my message and must go back with my answer. Come, Morton."

At the sound of the familiar name Maggie looked round, and when her eyes fell on Morton, she blushed deeply. To hide her confusion from the roomful of men, she turned her back and bowed her head close to the pillow whereon lay the head of the patient. More nettled than ever, Morton started to move quickly away, when there appeared at the doorway the frail form of Mrs Forsyth. "God be gude to us, if this is no Morton. Oh but I'm gled to see you and sae will the gudeman. I went out to look for him, an' hav'na found him, but he'll sune be here an', onyway, you're going to bide wi' us."

"I am sorry that I cannot."

"But ye maun. Ye dinna ken hoo yer takin' awa' concerned us and pit us aboot."

"You forget I am a prisoner."

"Prisoner! You are nae prisoner. You're noo in oor hoose an' you'll just bide here an' let thae Yankees gae awa'."

"I am afraid they would insist on taking me with them."

"Hoots, man, I'll haud ye. Maggie, do you ken Morton's come?"

"Yes, mother; I saw him."

"Weel, come ower and mak him stay an' no gang back to be bullyragged by a when Yankees."

Maggie made no reply, but turned to avoid the gaze of the Americans attracted by the scene at the door and her mother's words. Morton also felt mortified at the situation. "Thank you, Mrs Forsyth, but I must go, and tell your husband and sons I have never forgot them and never will." Eluding her grasp he followed Colonel Vanderberg, who stood outside the door with laughing countenance. He had not gone far when a swift step was heard behind and his name was uttered. Turning he saw Maggie, who held out her right hand. "Take this," she said, "I may not see you—again." There was a sob as she uttered the last word. He grasped what she held to him and before he could say a word she had turned and fled back to the house. Morton held the object up to the light

of the nearest camp-fire. It was his signet-ring.

More perplexed than ever, angry with Maggie and angry with himself, he braced himself and followed the Colonel in silence until the camp was reached. Supper awaited them, and that disposed of, the Colonel, wearied with his day's exertion, flung himself on the ground and fell asleep. Morton tried in vain to do likewise.

At daybreak the army was astir and the expectation of the men was an order to renew the assault upon the British position. No such order came, and it was wearing well into the forenoon when the commanding-officers were summoned to attend at the General's tent to hold a council - of - war. Among others Colonel Vanderberg went. Morton watched eagerly his return, and when he came his questioning eyes told what his tongue, from courtesy, would not ask. "Well, Morton, you would like to know what has been decided upon, and as it is no secret, I will tell you. The campaign has been abandoned and the army goes back to the States to go into winter-quarters. We marched into Canada to co-operate with Wilkinson. Last night the General received a despatch that he had not yet left Sackett's Harbor, while we supposed he was now steering his triumphant way down the St Lawrence, and might even be at the mouth of the Chateaugay waiting for us. It was argued that, as Wilkinson had not moved, and it was uncertain if he would, nothing was to be gained by

our army going on, for, without the flotilla, we could not cross the St Lawrence to take Montreal."

"And what of the disgrace of retiring before an enemy whom you have burnt powder with for an afternoon?"

"There you have us, Morton. I urged that, before we fell back, the honor of our flag required our routing the enemy in front of us, but the General showed that he has had all along complete information of its position and strength, obtained from spies and deserters—that there are six lines of wooden breastworks, held by Indians and light troops, and that only after storming them would we come in face of the main position, where the regulars are entrenched with cannon and commanded by Sir George Prevost in person. When there was nothing to be gained, it was asked, what was the use of further fighting? The miscarriage of the attempt under Purdy to flank the enemy's position discouraged our officers, who, altho' they do not say it, want to get away from this miserable condition of cold and wet and mud."

"So we go back whence we came?" remarked Morton moodily, as he thought of the stable at Chateaugay.

"My dear fellow, bear up; I will do my best to have you exchanged."

Morton shook his head as he said, "I am not held as a prisoner of war."

The Colonel bit his lip. "I have not told you all.

The carrying of the decision of the council to Wilkinson was entrusted to me."

"And so you leave me!" exclaimed Morton sadly.

"I start after dinner, and cheer up, man; we will have a good one as a farewell feast." Then, with evident hesitation, the Colonel went on, as delicately as possible, to show Morton that he had better withdraw his parole and go again under a guard. Removed from his protection, it would not be safe to move among men soured by an unfortunate campaign. Morton assented and expressed his thanks for advice he knew it pained the Colonel to give. Dinner over, the Colonel's horse was brought, and with a warm grasp of the hand he bade Morton good-bye, leapt into the saddle, and galloped out of sight. Morton saw him not again.

In a despondent mood Morton turned away and sought the guard-tent, when he gave himself up to the officer-of-the-day, who accepted his surrender as a matter of course. The soldiers took little notice of him, being in high spirits at the prospect of going back to the States and busily engaged in the preparations to leave. That afternoon part of the baggage-train left and went floundering along the muddy road to Four Corners. As evening drew nigh, the rain, accompanied by a raw east wind, recommenced, flooding the level clearances upon which the tents were pitched and making everybody miserable. The captain of the guard sought shelter from the blast and the water by causing

the tents he controlled to be pitched on the slope of a hollow scooped out by a creek, and in one of them Morton lay down along with seven soldiers. Sleep soon came to relieve him of his depression in mind and discomfort of body, and the hours sped while he was so unconscious that he did not hear when his companions left to take their turn on duty and those they relieved took their places in the tent. His first deep sleep was over when he felt that some furtive hand was being passed over the canvas to find the opening. When the flap was drawn aside, so dark was it that he could not distinguish who stood there. He supposed it was some belated private seeking cover from the pelting rain and he was about to turn and resume his slumber when a flint was struck and the tent was lit for a moment by its sparks. Somebody lighting a pipe, he said, too drowsy to look. A minute afterwards he felt that the curtain of the tent where his head lay was being cautiously lifted and soon a hand reached in, touched his face, and then catching the collar of his coat began pulling. He made a motion to resist, when a voice whispered, "Hemlock." In a flash he realized he was about to be rescued, and, guided by the hand that grasped him, slowly crept out. No sooner was he upon his feet, than he felt men were gliding past him into the tent. All at once there was a sound of striking, as of knives being driven into the bodies of the sleeping inmates, a slight commotion, a few

groans, and then all was still. Morton's flesh crept, as he guessed at the horrid work in which the Indians were engaged. So intensely dark was it, that he could see nothing. There was a slight shuffling of feet and he was grasped by the arm on either side and hurried forward. He knew they were following the course of the ravine, for he could hear the wash of the creek. Suddenly his conductors came to a halt and there was a pause, until a faint chirrup was heard. Then the bank was climbed and, emerging on a clearance, Morton saw the tents of the American camp some distance to his left, lit up by the smoldering fires that burned dimly between the rows. Looking round, he for the first time saw his companions, who were, as he suspected, a band of Indians. Taking advantage of every available cover the Indians glided, in single file, across the bit of open that intervened between where they stood and the bush. When its shelter was gained, they halted on a dry knoll, and squatted, when they began to giggle and to chatter in their native tongue, plainly exulting over the success of their raid. Morton tried to communicate with them, but found they could not speak English, and the only word they uttered which he recognized was "Hemlock," altho' that great chief was not among them. One of them could speak a little French, which, however, Morton did not understand. When daylight began to creep in upon the darkness, they became alert, and

as soon as it was clear enough to see where they were going they started; Morton had no idea in what direction. All he knew was, that their course led them over a swampy country intersected by stony ridges, and that had it not been that the leaders of the file broke a path he could never have followed. The exertion was exhausting and he would have succumbed at the end of the first hour had it not been that the spirit of freedom elated him, and the knowledge that every mile he overtook increased the distance between him and the hated bondage from which he had escaped spurred him on. On the edge of an apparently limitless swamp they paused before entering upon it to have a smoke. It was apparent that they carried no food. Morton sank upon a pile of leaves that had drifted against a log and stretched his wearied legs. Refreshed by the rest, he faced the swamp with courage, soon finding, however, that, without the help of the Indians, he could have made little headway. With the light step and agility of cats they stepped over quaking surfaces and sprang from log to log until solid land was reached, and with it came the sound of rushing water. Escaping from the brush, a broad river, dashing impetuously over a rocky channel, burst in view. Following its bank in single file, Morton saw it grew wider, until it expanded into a lake, when he knew it was the St Lawrence. On coming opposite the promontory that marked the inlet

of the river from the lake, the Indians eagerly scrutinized it. Gathering some damp leaves they made a smoke. The signal was seen by those opposite, for a long-boat was launched from under the trees and rapidly approached them. Morton's heart leapt with joy when he distinguished that the steersman had a red-coat on, and as the boat drew nearer and he could make out the ruddy countenances of the crew, frank and open in expression, and catch the sound of their hearty English speech, he could not resist the impulse to swing his hat and wake the echoes with a lusty cheer. The Indians grinned and one clapped him on the back in high approval.

The corporal in charge of the boat informed Morton that he belonged to the garrison of Coteau-du-lac and was, for the week, with the party on the point, to guard the south channel. There were so many Indians that the boat had to leave part for a second trip. On landing at the point Morton was warmly welcomed by the officer in charge, and given the best he had, which proved to be fried pork and biscuit. At noon the boat that daily brought supplies from Coteau arrived, and in it Morton with the Indians embarked. As soon as he stepped ashore, he made for the commander's quarters and was shown into the presence of Col. Lethbridge. On announcing who he was, the Colonel welcomed him as one from the dead and impatiently demanded to hear when and how he had escaped.

When he came to tell of the exploit of the preceding night, and that the Indians who had performed in it were waiting in the barrack-yard, the Colonel thumped the table and swore each man of them would take home all the tobacco and pork he could carry. Going out to see them before they left, Morton learned through an interpreter of Hemlock's death and that his rescue was in fulfilment of an order he had left. They were going to Oka to join the party who were on the way from the Chateaugay with his body, to bury it beside that of his daughter, and hold a funeral lodge. Morton was deeply moved. "Faithful soul," he exclaimed, "would to heaven he had lived that I might have shown him my gratitude." Applying to the paymaster he obtained an advance, and in parting with the Indians pressed a big Mexican dollar into the hand of each of them.

Colonel Lethbridge insisted on Morton's being his guest, and after leaving him in his bedroom sent his servant to wait upon him, and who brought a fresh suit of clothes. Morton was the hero of the garrison, and when he appeared at the mess-table, so many complimentary speeches were made, so many songs sung, and so many toasts drank that it was nigh midnight when he got to bed. He rose next morning intent on entering harness again, and over a late breakfast discussed with Col. Lethbridge as to how he could rejoin his regiment, which had been called to the Niagara frontier, and it was

agreed he should go by the next convoy, always provided Wilkinson did not come, which, after what Morton reported of Hampton's army returning to the States, Lethbridge doubted. Each day tidings of Wilkinson's leaving the shelter of Sackett's Harbor had been looked for, and the feeling was that unless he left within a week he would not come at all, for the season was now well-advanced, and already on several mornings had ice formed round boats while lying at Coteau. Col. Scott had been sent to Cornwall to superintend the preparations there, and Lethbridge had taken his place at the less important point. The following week the unexpected happened—late one afternoon a gunboat came down the lake under press of canvas, with word that Wilkinson had started—was descending the river with a flotilla of 300 boats bearing 7000 men. A few days of excitement and wearing suspense succeeded, and then came word of the battle of Crystler's Farm—how a strong brigade of Americans had landed at the head of the Long Sault rapids to clear the north bank of the batteries the British had planted to prevent the flotilla descending and been routed by General Boyd. Treading upon the heels of the news of that decisive victory came the announcement that Wilkinson had abandoned his undertaking and had gone back to the United States by sailing into Salmon river with his beaten army. The campaign was ended for the season, and troops

were ordered into winter-quarters. The day the news reached Coteau of Wilkinson's flight to French Mills, a string of boats came up loaded with military stores for Upper Canada and a few troops. To Morton's astonishment, among them was the detachment he had conducted to the Chateaugay. The camp there having been broken up, they were on their way to join the regiment, and hoped to reach it before navigation closed. Gladly Morton resumed command and six days later reported at Niagara.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER a night of excitement from wild alarms, the Americans left the Forsyth household at daylight, leaving not one behind, for even the wounded officer they carried with them in a litter. Utterly worn out the family sought rest, and it was late in the day when the father arose, and leaving the others, sleeping, went out to see what of his property had been left. The more closely he examined the more fully the unwelcome fact was forced upon him, that he was left destitute, and when he came upon the black head of his cow, which the soldiers had slaughtered for beef, he sat down in a despairing mood. "It's no for mysel' I'm troubled," he exclaimed, "but for my ailin' wife and puir Maggie! To face a Canadian winter wi' a bare loof is awfu." And he gave way to a fit of despondency. "This winna do," he said with a rueful look at the devastation around him, "a stout heart to a stey brae, and wi' God's help, I'll mak the best o't" When Maggie sometime afterwards appeared at the door he was industriously laboring to bring his surroundings into order. "Weel, lass, an' hoo are ye after oor big pairty?"

"No so ill; but, father, what are we to do, there's no a bite in the house? The cellar is rookit as clean as if a pack of wolves had visited it."

The old man approached and taking his daughter by the hand drew her to the seat by the door-step. "Maggie, I ken ye hae a brave spirit and can bear the worst. I am a ruined man. The Yankees have eaten us oot o' house an' hold. The very boards o' the byre hae been torn awa' to licht their fires. Oor coo, the young beasts, the pigs, hae a' been eaten. There's no even a chuckie left."

"O but there is," interrupted Maggie, "see to Jenny Tapknot over there," pointing smilingly thro' tears to a favorite chicken that had eluded the soldiers and was eyeing them from a branch.

"Weel, weel, we hae one leevin' thing left us. O' a' oor crop there is naething to the fore but the unthreshed wheat, an' mickle o't is useless from the sojers using it to lie on."

"Was it right, father, for them to take your property without paying you?"

"Pay me! The thocht o' paying a subject o' the King never entered their heids. Micht is richt wi' them. What we are to do is no just clear to me yet, but we'll trust in Him wha has never failed to supply oor bite an' sup. Only, Maggie, ye maun for yer mither's sake put a cheerfu' face on't an' mak the best o't."

"Hoot, father, what gars ye doot me? We hae aye been provided for an' sae will we yet, says the

auld sang. You take the canoe an' go down to Morrison's an' see what you can get there to keep us going until the morn, an' while you're away I'll red the house an' hae a' ready for supper gin mither wakens."

With brightened face and hopeful step the old man did as asked and did not return empty-handed. Over the frugal meal the situation was discussed and both the husband and daughter were glad to see that the calamity that had overtaken them so far from overwhelming Mrs Forsyth, roused her, and revived the active and hopeful spirit that had been a feature in her character before ailments and age had overtaken her. Long and earnest was the consultation by the fireside that night, and many a plan proposed to tide over the long' months that must intervene before another harvest could be reaped. As bed-time drew near, the father lifted down the book, and after they had sung the 23rd psalm, he read the 17th chapter of First Kings, and poured out his heart in thanksgiving for the unnumbered blessings bestowed upon him and his, and, above all, for the departure of the invader.

Two days afterwards, when it had become asured that Hampton was in leisurely retreat whence he came, those of the militia, at Baker's camp, who wished were given leave to go to their homes, and the Forsyth lads returned. They were much exasperated at the plundered state of their home, and more provoked than before at the policy which

permitted the enemy to journey back over 24 miles of Canadian territory without attempt to harass him. Leaving the scanty pay they had received as soldiers, it was arranged they should go lumbering for the winter, their wages to be sent home as they got them. The winter proved a hard one. The presence of so large a body of troops had consumed much of the produce the settlers needed for themselves, and although they had been paid what they considered at the time good prices they now found it difficult to procure what they wanted from Montreal. The result to the Forsyths was, that their neighbors were unable to give them much help and had it not been that the miller at the Basin gave credit, they would have been sometimes in actual want. Despite the bareness of the cupboard, the winter was a happy one: the very effort to endure and make the best of their hard lot conducing to cheerfulness. When the snow began to melt, the sons returned, and the new clearing at which the father had worked all winter was made ready for seed, so that more land than before was put under a crop. The pinch was worst in July and until the potatoes were fit to eat. After that there was rude plenty and an abundant harvest was reaped.

With returning comfort Mrs Forsyth began to fail. Whether it was the effects of the lack of usual food, or the strain to help the family having been beyond her strength, signified little. With

the coming of the snow she began to lose strength and, as her husband saw with deep sorrow, "to dwine awa." She accepted her lot uncomplainingly, studying how to give least trouble, and spending her days between her bed and the easy chair by the fireside, generally knitting, for she said she hoped to leave them a pair of stockings apiece. The New Year had passed and the days were lengthening when it was plain her rest was near.

It was a beautiful day when she asked that her chair be moved so that she could see out at the window. The brilliant sunlight fell on the snow that shrouded the winding course of the Chateaugay and flecked the trees, while a blue haze hung in the distance that prophesied of coming spring. "A bonnie day," she remarked.

"Ay," replied Maggie, "warm enough to be a sugar day."

"It's ower fine to last and there will be storms and hard frost afore the trees can be tapped," said Mrs Forsyth, "an' I'll no be here to help."

"Dinna say that, mither; the spring weather will bring you round."

"Na, na, my bairn. The robin's lilt will no wauken me, nor will my een again see the swelling bud, but through the mercy o' my God I trust they will be lookin' on the everlasting spring o' the bidin' place o' his people."

"Oh, mither: I canna bear the thocht o' parting wi' you."

"It's natural to feel sae; my ain heart-strings were wrung when my mither deed, an' yet I see noo it was for the best. I have become a cumberer o' the grund, unable to labor even for an hour a day in the vineyard, and sae the Maister o't is goin' to gie me the rest o' which, lang since, I got frae His hand the arles. Ae thing ye maun promise me, Maggie, and that is ye maun never leev your faither."

"What makes you think sae o' me, mother? I hav'na even a thocht o' leevin' him."

"I ken ye hav'na a thocht the noo o' sic a thing, but the day will come when you micht—when your love for anither would incline you to forget your duty. Sweet the drawing o' heart to heart in the spring o' youth, an' the upspringing, when you least expec' it, o' the flow'r o' love. The peety is, sae mony are content with the flow'r an' pu' it an' let the stem wither. Your faither an' I werna o' that mind. The flow'r grew into a bauld stalk in the simmer o' affection, an' noo we reap the harvest. It's no like Scotch folk to open their mous on sic maitters, but I may tell you, my lassie, that sweet an' warm as was oor love when your faither cam a coortin', it's nae mair to be compared to oor love since syne an' to this minute, than the licht o' lightnin' is to the sunshine. I thocht to hae tended him in his last days, to hae closed his een, an' placed the last kiss on his cauld lips, but it's no to be, an' ye maun promise me to perform what your mither wad hae dune had she lived."

"I promise, mother; I promise never to leave him."

"Weel does he deserve a' you can dae for him; he's puir, he's hamely in looks, he's no sae quick in thocht or speech as mony; but he is what mony great an' rich an' smairt men are not—an honest man, wha strives in a quiet way to do his duty by his fellowman an' his Maker."

"What makes you speak so, mother? I am sure I never gave you cause to think I'd leave the family."

"Your brothers will gang their ain gate by-and-by an' their wives nicht na want to hae the auld man at their ingle; only o' you may I ask that whither you go he shall go an' drink o' your cup an' eat o' your bread. Dinna marry ony man unless sure he will be kind to your faither an' let you do a dochter's duty by him."

"I hav'na met ony man, mother, that will hae me, except auld Milne."

"Dinna mak fun o' me, Maggie; you ken what I mean. The lad Morton will come some day—"

"Wheesht, mother: he's nothing to me."

"I ken different: you loe him deep an' true an' he loes you. Whether he will pit pride o' family an' station aside to ask you to be his wife some wad doot, but I div'na. He'll be back, an' when he does dinna forget what I have said."

The heavy step of the father was here heard outside; the door opened and he came in. Drawing

a chair beside his wife he sat down, and, without uttering a word, surveyed her wasted and furrowed face with tender gaze. She returned his affectionate look and placed her hand in his. As she looked at them, sitting in the afternoon sunshine with clasped hands, and that radiant expression of mutual love, Maggie's heart, already full, was like to burst. She hastened out and falling beneath a tree wept bitterly.

* * * * *

Next morning when they awoke the sad truth became apparent, that the mother of the family had had a change for the worse in her sleep. Her mind wandered and her strength had completely left. The only one she recognized was her husband, and when he spoke she smiled. The spells of unconsciousness grew longer as the day wore on and towards evening it could be seen her last was near. As often happens in the Canadian winter, a pet day had been followed by a storm. A piercing blast from the west filled the air with drift and sent the frozen snow rattling on the window-panes. They were all gathered round her bed, when she woke, and her eyes wonderingly looked upon them, tried to make out what it all meant, and gave it up as hopeless. "Eh, sirs, a bonnie day," she said, as if speaking to herself, "the westlin win' blaws saft frae the sea an' the bit lammies rin after their mithers on the hill-side. Sune the kye will be comin' hame an' after milkin' I'll snod mysel', for

somebody's comin' to see somebody, an' we'll dauner doun e'e the gloamin' by the burn. Isna he a comely lad! Stracht an' supple, and an e'e in his heid that a bairn wad trust. Tak him? I'd gang tae the warl's end wi' him...What's that! The kirk bell. I didna think it was sae late. Sure enouch, there's the folk strachlin' ower the muir an' the laird riding on his powny...Surely it's growin' mirk. Mither, tak me in your airms an' pit me to sleep. What will you sing to me? The Flowers o' the Forest, the nicht, mither. Kiss me noo, I'll be a better bairn the morn an' dae what you tell me...Na, na, pick yer ain flowers: this poesy is for my baby brither...Faither, dinna lift your haun' to me: I'm sorry. I'll no dae it again. Whaur am I?...Faither, dinna you hear me? Oh come quick an' save me, the tide is lowpin' fast ower the rock. There's the boatie rowin' to us: it'll be here enow an' we'll be saved...Did you hear that? It's Sandy the piper come to the toun. Let's rin an' meet him...I'm tired o' daffin' an wad hae a rest. Let's creep into the kirk-yaird an' sit doun by granfaither's grave. Hoo sweet the merle sings, an' tak tent to the corn-craik ower yonner...Weel, weel, I canna understan' it. His ways are no oor ways, but I'll lippen to Him tae the end. Maggie, Maggie, whaur are ye? I'm gaun awa', an' I want you to rin an' tell the goodman o' the hoose to hae a chamber ready for me. What am I saying? God forgie me, my mind wanders; he's had ane waitin'

for me this mony a day...I see you noo, my bairns.
Guid nicht, tae we meet again."

There was a long silence. The father rose, and closed the drooping eyelids that would never be lifted and laid down the weary head which would never move again.

CHAPTER XV.

ONE July morning Mr Forsyth was working in the field beside the river when he saw a canoe shoot in sight. It drew up to the bank and its occupant walked towards him.

"Man, it is you!" he exclaimed, grasping the extended hand. "At the first look I didna ken you. Hoo ye hae changed since last I saw you."

"I know I have," answered Morton, "the months since we parted have aged me more than half as many years would in ordinary course of life. The hardships of war, the strife between life and death on the battle-field, develop fast what is good or bad in a man."

"Ye'll hae had your share o' the fechtin'?"

"Yes; our regiment took part in all the movements in the Niagara district, and during the campaigning season there was not a week we did not exchange shots with the enemy or have to endure a toilsome march to check his plans."

"And were you hurt at a'?"

"Nothing to speak of; scratches that did not keep me off duty over a few days. I may be thankful

to have got off so well, for many a pretty fellow will never see home again."

"War's a gruesome trade."

"It is that: I have seen scenes of horror that I try to banish from my memory. The carnage at Lundy's Lane was sickening, and the cries of the wounded for help heart-breaking, for, from the darkness and the enemy's pressing us, we could not reach them."

"That brither should butcher brither is awfu' proof o' total depravity. After a', thae Yankees, though their ways are not oor ways, are flesh o' oor flesh, an' we should live aside ane anither in peace."

"In this war, at least, Mr Forsyth, they are to blame. They declared it and if ever war is justifiable it is surely one like that we have fought and won, where a people rise to defend their native land against the invader."

"I dinna dispute you, but as I creep near to my end, my heart softens to my fellow-men o' a' creeds and races and I wish to see peace and good-fellowship the warld ower."

"So do I, but sure and permanent peace is not to be won by surrender of right. It is better for all that the best blood of Canada and Britain has soaked the fields within the sound of the roar of Niagara, than that Canada should have become a conquered addition to the United States."

"You're richt in that: the sacrifice is sair, but

trial bitter, but a country's independence maun be maintained. Canadians will think mair o' their country when they see what it has cost to defend it. Noo that the war is ended, you'll be leaving Canada?"

"That depends on what your daughter says. My regiment sails from Quebec by the end of the month."

"What mean ye, sir, by Maggie hae'in' aucht to dae wi' your going?"

"Simply this, that if she will take me as her husband and you will give your consent, I shall sell my commission and remain in Canada."

"You are surely no in earnest? What has the dochter o' a backwoods farmer t' dae wi' an officer?"

"Since I landed in Canada I have had many false notions rudely torn away, and one of them is, that there is any connection between worth and station in life. I have found more to admire in the shanty than I ever did in the parlors of the Old Country."

"That's repeatin' what Rabbie Burns wrote, the rank is but the guinea stamp."

"I have proved it true: for the first time in my life I have become intimate with those whose living depends upon the labor of their hands, and my Old World notions have melted away, when I found them better than those whose boast it is they never soiled their fingers with manual toil."

"Aye, aye; nae guid comes o' tryin' to escape the

first command to fallen man, 'in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.'"

"What say you?" asked Morton.

"To your asking Maggie? Oh, dinna speak o't. She's my ae ewe lamb and I canna pairt wi' her."

"I do not mean you should; we would go to Upper Canada together."

The old man paused and leant upon his hoe and Morton stood respectfully behind him. After long silence he raised his head. "I canna answer you. It's no for me to put my ain selfish will against her good; gang and let her choose for hersel'."

"Thank you," said Morton with emotion.

"We have had a backward spring; frost every week a maist to the middle o' June, an' sic cauld winds since syne that naething grows. We hae sown in hope, but I'm fearfu' there will be little to reap. Sic a spring the auldest settler canna mind o'. Look at thae tatties! What poor spindly things they are, an' this the first week o' July."

"It has not been so bad in the west."

"I'm glad to hear it. Weel, this being the first real warm day we've had, I tell't Maggie to busk hersel' and gang and veesit the neebors, for she's been in a sad and sorrowfu' way since her mither deed. She said she had nae heart to veesit, but wad tak a walk alang the river and be back to mak my denner. Her brithers we expect hame every day from takin' rafts to Montreal."

"I'll go and seek her," remarked Morton, as he

turned, and the old man went on hoeing. Morton had gone about a mile, when his eye caught the flutter of the linen kerchief Maggie had pinned round her neck. She did not see him and as she sauntered before him, he marked her graceful carriage, and muttered to himself, "A woman worthy to woo and win." Unwilling to startle her by going too near, he cried "Miss Forsyth."

She paused, turned in astonishment, and as her color came and went said, "Is it you?"

"Yes, and surely you will not shrink from me as you did when last we met."

She held out her hand and as he pressed it, simply said, "I'm glad you're safe and well."

"Have you no warmer greeting for me?"

"What warmer do you deserve?"

"My deservings are nothing, but your own kind heart might plead for me."

"Oh, dear: the conceit of some men, who think they can pick up hearts on the banks of the Chateaugay as they would acorns."

"And what of women who pitch back rings as if they stung them?"

Maggie laughed and replied, "The gift is measured with the giver."

"When a gift is a token of the hour of peril, what then, my lady? Is it a thing to be scorned?"

"Something to be restored to the sender when he gets out of the trap, that he may bestow it on somebody else."

"I swear I never cared for anybody else."

"Who asked you? If you must needs confess, you should have visited the fathers at the Basin on your way here."

"I'm Puritan enough to desire to confess direct to the one I have offended."

"So you have offended me?"

"You know I care for you."

"How should I? From your many messages these last twenty months?"

Morton felt vexed and Maggie observed and enjoyed his perplexity. "Come," she said, "it is wearing on to dinner-time and I know what soldiers' appetites are. We had some soldier visitors who left us nothing. We will go home."

"Not until I have said what I want to tell you," he said warmly.

"Oh, you have something to tell me! You must have. Soldiers and hunters have always long stories to tell about themselves. Keep them until you have had some of our backwoods fare."

"Tease me no more, Maggie; my heart is yours whether you accept it or not. That I have been neglectful and ungrateful I confess. How much I owe you I did not know until some months after I saw you."

"You owe me nothing."

"I owe you my life."

"You owe it to Hemlock; not to me."

"I know all, brave heart. I met Mrs Scott at

Kingston and she told me of your journey to Oka, but for which Hemlock would never have known of my peril. As she spoke, the smouldering love I had for you burst into flame and your image has never been absent from my mind an hour since. When my comrades caroused and spoke loosely, I thought of you and turned away and tried to live worthily of you."

"You know how to praise yourself."

"No, no, my Maggie: I speak it not in praise of myself but in proof of my devotion, for how can a man show his love for a woman better than by forcing himself to live as he knows she would wish him to do?"

"And if you so loved this somebody of yours, why did you not write her?"

"You forget a soldier's life is uncertain; I knew not the hour when I might fall. I said to myself a thousand times, if my life is spared I will seek her I love and plead my cause. When the bugle sounded the call to prepare for action I never failed to breathe an ardent prayer that Heaven's blessing might rest upon you. I have been spared, the supreme hour in my life has come, and I await your answer."

Maggie stood still. Her eyes fell to the ground and her fingers unconsciously plucked to pieces the flowers they held.

"Will you not speak?" pleaded Morton.

In a low voice she replied, "I cannot marry."

"Why?"

"I will never leave my father."

"I do not ask you should. I value his honest worth, and he shall be my father too, for I never saw my own, he died when I was a child. Say you will make me the happiest man on the Chateaugay and we will never part."

"I say it is time to go and get dinner ready. Father, poor man, will be starving. Mr Morton, did you ever hoe potatoes for a forenoon?"

"Nonsense; speak the word and end my anxiety."

"Oh, I'm not anxious. If you had hoed for half a day you would know what hunger was."

"My hunger today is of another sort."

"Ah, well, boys ought to learn to restrain their appetites."

"Play with me no more. Let me know my fate. Give me my answer."

"Won't it be time enough when the minister asks?"

* * * * *

It was not much of a dinner that Maggie cooked, for she boiled the potatoes without salt and fried the pork to a crisp. It did not much matter, however, for of the three the father was the only one who had an appetite, and he did not complain. When done, he left to resume his task, and the young couple were alone. At supper he was told all, when he quietly rose, gripped Morton by the hand and said nothing. Next day the two sons

arrived, and, on learning the news, by way of congratulation, slapped Maggie on the back until she declared it was sore. There were long discussions over Morton's plans. He told them he had obtained promotion after Lundy's Lane, and as captain his commission was worth a good deal; he would sell it, and then, as a retired officer, he would be entitled to a grant of land in Upper Canada. He proposed they should all leave and go with him. To this father and sons were much inclined, for the fact that the place they occupied was subject to seigniorial rent they did not like. It was arranged Morton should go to Quebec and sell his commission and by the time he returned they would be ready to join him.

Four days after he had left, Maggie received a letter from him, enclosing one from Mrs Scott. He said he found that Colonel Scott had arrived in Montreal, and, after winding up some ordnance business there, meant to sail for England with the Fall fleet. Mrs Scott sent a pressing invitation to Maggie to come and stay with her until Morton returned from Quebec. Maggie went, expecting to stay ten days or so, but her visit lengthened out to the end of August. They were happy weeks, spent in enjoyable society and in the delightful task of the preparation that is the prelude to a happy marriage. Morton at last got back, and had not merely the money obtained for his commission, but a patent for a large tract of land on the shore

of Lake Ontario, obtained by him in a personal interview with Sir George Prevost, the gallant Gordon Drummond, his old commander, accompanying him and pressing his claim to generous recognition. Leaving Maggie in Montreal, he went again to the Chateaugay to tell all was ready. While there, he took a run up to Four Corners, his business being to visit the poor widow whose only son had been slain in the skirmish that led to his imprisonment. He found her and not only made sure she would be cared for but instituted steps to secure a pension, for congress was considering the question of relief to those who had suffered by the war. During his stay at Four Corners, he lived with Mr Douglass, and repaid with earnest gratitude the advances he had made him while living in misery in the stable, which sad abode he looked into with a swelling heart. On the morning after his return, they were ready to embark in the three canoes that were in waiting to convey them and their belongings, when the old man was missed. Morton, guessing where he was, went to seek him, and found him kneeling by the grave of his wife. Reverently approaching, he whispered the boatmen were anxious to start, assisted him to rise, and, leaning heavily on his arm, led him to the canoe where he was to sit. One last look at the shanty his hands had built and the fields they had cleared, and a bend in the river shut them out from his sight forever. Resuming his wonted contented cheerfulness, he adapted

himself to the change, and rose still higher in Morton's esteem. When they reached the Basin, the wind was favorable for the bateau that was waiting to leave on her trip to Lachine, and there they arrived late in the evening. The following morning Morton left for Montreal with Mr Forsyth, the sons remaining to stow away the outfit in the bateau, which done, they also journeyed to the same place. That evening there was a quiet little party at Colonel Scott's quarters, and next morning a larger assemblage, for every officer off duty in the town was present, to see the army chaplain unite the happy pair. When all was over and Maggie had gone to prepare for the journey, Morton received congratulations that he knew were sincere. "Why," said Major Fitzjames, "she is fit to be a Duchess."

"She is fit for a more difficult position," interjected Colonel Scott, "she has a mother-wit that stands her well alike in the circles of polished society and in the hour of danger and hardship."

"Who is this that is such a paragon?" asked Mrs Scott, who had just come in.

"Mrs Morton."

"Oh, say she is a true woman, and you say all. Mr Morton you have got a treasure."

"I know it," he replied, "and I will try to be worthy of her. She will be the benediction of the life I owe her."

The day was fine and, for a wonder, the road

was good, so that a large party, many of them on horseback, escorted the newly-married pair to Lachine. As they drove past King's Posts Morton recalled his first visit to it, the spy, and all the painful complications that had ensued, and now so happily ended. As they stood on the narrow deck of the bateau, and the wind, filling the huge sail, bore them away, a cheer rose, led by Colonel Scott. It was answered from the receding boat, and Maggie waved her handkerchief.

The journey was tedious and toilsome, but when they sailed into the bay on which Morton's land was situated, saw its quality and fine situation, they felt they had been rewarded for coming so far. That Maggie proved an admirable help-mate need hardly be told, but what was remarkable is, that Morton became a successful farmer. Willing to put his hand to whatever there was to do, under his father-in-law's tuition, he quickly became proficient, and when there was work to be done he did not say to his helpers "Go" but "Come," and set them an example of cheerful and persevering exertion. Having land and enough to spare, he induced a good class of immigrants to buy from him, so that, before twenty years, his settlement was known as one of the most prosperous on Lake Ontario. Influential and public-spirited, Morton, as his circumstances grew easy and did not exact the same close attention to his personal affairs, took a leading part in laying the commercial and

political foundations of Upper Canada, and Maggie was widely known in its best society. That they were a happy couple everybody knew, and their descendants are among the most prominent subjects of the Dominion.

ARCHANGE AND MARIE.

I.—THEIR DISAPPEARANCE.

DURING the revolutionary war a number of Acadians left the New England States for Canada, preferring monarchic to republican rule. The British authorities provided for these twice-exiled refugees with liberality, giving them free grants of lands and the necessary tools and implements, also supplying them from the nearest military posts with provisions for three years, by which time they would be self-sustaining. Some half dozen families asked for and received lots in the county of Huntingdon and settled together on the shore of the St Lawrence. Accustomed to boating and lumbering in their old Acadian homes, they found profitable exercise in both pursuits in their new, and after making small clearances left their cultivation to the women, while they floated rafts to Montreal or manned the bateaux which carried on the traffic between that place and Upper Canada. The shanty of one of these Acadians, that of Joseph

Caza, occupied a point that ran into the great river near the mouth of the LaGuerre.

It was a sunny afternoon towards the end of September and the lake-like expanse of the river, an unruffled sheet of glassy blue, was set in a frame of forest already showing the rich dyes of autumn. It was a scene of intense solitude, for, save the clearance of the hardy settler, no indication of human life met the gaze. There was the lonely stretch of water and the all-embracing forest, and that was all. Playing around the shanty were two sisters, whose gleeful shouts evoked solemn echoes from the depths of the forest, for they were engaged in a game of hide-and-seek amid the rows of tall corn, fast ripening in the sunshine. They were alone, for their father and brothers were away boating and their mother had gone to the beaver-meadow where the cows pastured. Breathless with their play the children sat down to rest, the head of the younger falling naturally into the lap of the older.

"Archange, I know something you don't."

"What is it?"

"What we are to have for supper. Mother whispered it to me when she went to milk. Guess?"

"Oh, tell me; I won't guess."

"Wheat flour pancakes. I wish she would come; I'm hungry."

"Let us go and meet her."

The children skipped along the footpath that led through the forest from the clearance to the pas-

ture and had gone a considerable distance before their mother came in sight, bearing a pail.

"Come to meet your mother, my doves! Ah, I have been long. The calves have broken the fence and I looked for them but did not find them. Archange, you will have to go or they may be lost. Marie, my love, you will come home with me."

"No, mother, do let me go with sister."

"No, you will get tired; take my hand. Remember the pancakes."

"I won't be tired; I want to go with Archange."

"Ah, well; the calves may not have strayed far; you may go. But haste, Archange, and find them, for the sun will soon set."

The children danced onwards and the mother listened with a smile to their shouts and chatter until the sounds were lost in the distance. On entering the house she stirred up the fire and set about preparing supper.

The sun set, leaving a trail of golden glory on the water, and she was still alone. The day's work was done and the simple meal was ready. The mother walked to the end of the clearance and gazed and listened; neither sight nor sound rewarded her. She shouted their names at the highest pitch of her voice. There was no response, save that a heron, scared from its roost, flapped its great wings above her head and sailed over the darkening waters for a quieter place of refuge.

"It is impossible anything can have befallen

them," she said to herself; "the calves could not have gone far and the path is plain. No, they must be safe, and I am foolish to be the least anxious. Holy mother, shield them from evil!"

Returning to the house, she threw a fresh log on the fire, and placing the food where it would keep warm she closed the door, casting one disconsolate look across the dark water at the western sky, from which the faintest glow had departed. Taking the path that led to the pasture, she hastened with hurried step to seek her children. She gained the pasture. The cows were quietly grazing; there was no other sign of life. Her heart sank within her. She shouted, and her cries pierced the dew-laden air. There was no response. She sank upon her knees and her prayer, oft repeated, was, "Mother of pity, have compassion on a mother's sorrow and give me back my little ones!"

The thought suddenly seized her that the children had failed to find the calves and, in returning, had not taken the path, but sought the house by a nigh cut through the woods. She sprang to her feet and hastened back. Alas! the door had not been opened, and everything was as she left it.

"My God!" she cried in the bitterness of her disappointment, "I fear me the wolf garou has met and devoured my children. What shall I do? Marie, my pretty one, wilt thou not again nestle in thy mother's bosom nor press thy cheek to mine? Holy Virgin, thou who hadst a babe of thine own,

look on me with compassion and give back to me my innocent lambs."

Again she sought the pasture, and even ventured, at her peril, to thread in the darkness the woods that surrounded it, shouting, in a voice shrill with agony, the names of the missing ones, but no answering sound came. Heedless of her garments wet with dew, of her weariness, her need of food and sleep, she spent the night wandering back and forth between house and pasture, hoping to find them at either place, and always disappointed. The stars melted away one by one, the twitter of the birds was heard, the tree-tops reddened, and the sun again looked down upon her. She resumed the search with renewed hope, for now she could see. With the native confidence of one born in the bush she traversed the leafy aisles, but her search was in vain. There was only a strip of bush to be examined, for a great swamp bounded it on one side as the St Lawrence did on the other, and into the swamp she deemed it impossible the children could have gone. She was more convinced than before that a wild beast had killed them and dragged their bodies to its lair in the swamp. Stunned by this awful conjecture, to which all the circumstances pointed, her strength left her, and in deep anguish of spirit she tottered homewards. On coming in sight of the shanty she marked with surprise smoke rising from the chimney. Her heart gave a great leap. "They

have returned!" she said joyfully. She hastened to the door. A glance brought back her sorrow. She saw only her husband and her eldest son."

"What ails thee? Your face is white as Christmas snow. We came from Coteau this morning and found nobody here. What is wrong?"

"Joseph," she replied in a hollow voice, "the wolf garou hath devoured our children."

"Never! Thou art mad. There is no wolf garou."

"I leave it all with the good God: I wish there was no wolf garou." Then she told him of the disappearance of the children and of her vain search. Husband and son listened attentively.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Caza, "they are not lost forever to us. Get us breakfast and Jean and I will track them and have them back to thee before long. You do not know how to find and follow a trail."

An hour later, shouldering their rifles, they set forth. The day passed painfully for the poor mother, and it was long after sunset when they returned. They had found no trace of the wanderers. They had met the calves, which, from the mud that covered them, had evidently been in the swamp and floundered there long before they got back to solid land at a point distant from the pasture. The father's idea was that the children had been stolen by Indians. Next day the search was resumed, the neighbors joining in it. At nightfall all returned baffled, perplexed and disheartened; Caza

more confident than before that the Indians were to blame. After a night's rest, he set off early for St Regis, where he got no information. Leaving there, he scoured the forest along Trout River and the Chateaugay, finding a few hunting-camps, whose dusky inmates denied all knowledge of the missing girls. He pursued his toilsome way to Caughnawaga and came back by the river St Louis without discovering anything to throw light on the fate of his children. The grief of the mother who had been buoying herself with the expectation that he would bring back the truants, is not to be described; and she declared it would be a satisfaction to her to be assured of their death rather than longer endure the burden of suspense. Again the father left to scour the wilderness that lies between the St Lawrence and the foot-hills of the Adirondacks, hoping to find in some wigwam buried in forest-depths the objects of his eager quest. On reaching Lake Champlain he became convinced that the captors were beyond his reach, and, footsore and broken-hearted, he sought his home, to make the doleful report that he had not found the slightest trace.

The leaves fluttered from the trees, the snow came in flurries from the north, the nights grew longer and colder, and, at last, winter set in. When the wind came howling across the icy plain into which the St Lawrence had been transformed, and the trees around their shanty groaned and wailed,

the simple couple drew closer to the blazing logs and thought sadly of their loved ones, pinched with cold and hunger, in the far-away wigwams of their heartless captors.

"They will grow up heathens," murmured the mother.

"Nay, they were baptized," suggested the father, "and that saves their souls. I hope they are dead rather than living to be abused by the savages."

"Say not that, my husband; they can never forget us, and will watch a chance to come back. Archangel will sit on thy knee again, and I will once more clasp my Marie to my bosom."

When bedtime came they knelt side by side, and in their devotions the wanderers were not forgotten.

Time rolled on, and Caza and his wife became old people. Each year added some frailty, until, at a good old age, the eyes of the mother were closed without having seen what she longed for—the return of her children. The husband tarried a while longer, and when he was laid to rest the sad and strange trial of their lives grew fainter and fainter in the memories of those who succeeded them, until it became a tradition known to few—as a mystery that had never been solved.

II.—THEIR FATE.

Archangel, holding Marie by the hand, on reaching the pasture, followed the fence to find where

the calves had broken out, and then traced their footprints, which led to the edge of the swamp. Here she hesitated. "Marie, you stay here until I come back."

"No, no; I will go with you; I can jump the wet places, you know."

"Yes, and get tired before you go far. Wait; I'll not be long in turning the calves back."

Marie, however, would not part from her sister, and followed her steps as she picked her way over the swamp; now walking a fallen tree and anon leaping from one mossy tussock to another. The calves were soon sighted, but the silly creatures, after the manner of their kind, half in play and half in fright, waited until the children drew near, when they tossed up their heels and ran. In vain Archange tried to head them. Cumbered by Marie, who cried when she attempted to leave her, she could not go fast enough, and when it became so dark that it was difficult to see the sportive animals, she awakened to the fact that she must desist.

"Marie, we will go home and leave the calves until morning."

"But if we don't get them they will have no supper."

"Neither will you; let us haste home or we will not see to get out of the swamp."

"There is no hurry; I am tired," and with these words Marie sat down on a log, and, pouting at her sister's remonstrances, waited until the deepening

gloom alarmed Archange, who, grasping the little hand, began, as she supposed, to retrace the way they had come. Marie was tired, and it now being dark, she slipped repeatedly into the water, until, exhausted and fretful, she flung herself on the broad trunk of a fallen hemlock and burst into tears. Archange was now dreadfully alarmed at their situation, yet it was some time before she was able to persuade her sister to resume their journey. They moved on with difficulty, and, after a while, the sight of solid green bush rising before them gladdened their strained eyes. "We have passed the swamp!" joyfully exclaimed Archange. They reached the ridge and scrambled up its side. The heart of the elder sister sank within her for she failed to recognize, in the starlight, a single familiar landmark. Could it be that, in the darkness, she had pursued the reverse way, and, instead of going towards home, had wandered farther away and crossed an arm of the swamp?

"Are we near home, Archange? I'm hungry."

"My darling, I fear we will have to stay here until daylight. We've lost our way."

"No, no; mother is waiting for us and supper is ready; let us go."

"I wish I knew where to go, but I don't. We are lost, Marie."

"Will we have no supper?"

"Not tonight, but a nice breakfast in the morning."

"And sleep here?"

"Yes, I will clasp you and keep you warm."

"I want my own bed, Archange," and the child broke down and softly wept.

Finding a dry hemlock knoll, Archange plucked some cedar brush, and lying down upon it, folded Marie in her arms, who, wearied and faint, fell asleep. It was broad daylight when they awoke, chilled and hungry. Comforting her sister as best she could, Archange descended to the swamp, confident that they would soon be home. She had not gone far, until she was bewildered. The treacherous morass retained no mark of their footprints of the night before, and she knew not whither to go. Long and painfully they struggled without meeting an indication of home, and the fear grew in Archange's breast that they were going farther and farther away from it. Noon had passed when they struck another long, narrow, stony ridge, which rose in the swamp like an island. Gladly they made for it, and seeking an open space, where the sunshine streamed through the interlacing foliage, enjoyed the heat, as it dried their wet garments and soothed their wearied limbs.

"If we only had something to eat," said Marie, wistfully.

"Oh, we will get plenty of nuts here. See, yonder is a butternut tree," and running to it Archange returned with a lapful, which she broke with a stone as Marie ate them. They satisfied her craving, and laying her head on the sunny bank she

fell asleep from fatigue. As soon as her breathing showed that she was sleeping soundly her sister stole from her side to explore the ridge and try to discover some trace of the way home. She found everything strange, and the conviction settled upon her mind that they were lost and that their sole hope of escape was in the searching-party, which she knew must be out, finding them. Little did she know that the morass their light steps had crossed would not bear the weight of a man, and that they were hopelessly lost and doomed to perish in the wilderness. Had she been alone she would have broken down; the care of her sister sustained her. For her she would bear up. On returning, she found her still asleep, and as she bent over her tear-stained face and lightly kissed it, she murmured, "I will take care of Marie and be her little mother."

The thought of home and mother nigh overcame her. Repressing the rising lump in her throat, she busied herself against her sister's waking. She increased her store of butternuts, adding beechnuts and acorns as well and broke them and arranged the kernels on basswood leaves, as on plates. She drew several big branches together and covered them with boughs which she tore from the surrounding cedars, and when the bower was complete she strewed its floor with dried ferns. She had finished and was sitting beside Marie when the little eyes opened and were greeted with a smile.

"Oh, I have been waiting ever so long for you, Marie. We are going to have a party. I have built a bower and laid out such a nice supper. We will play at keeping house."

The child laughed gleefully on seeing the arrangements, and the forest rang with their mirth as the hours sped on. When evening approached Marie grew wistful; she wanted her mother; she wanted to go home, and Archange soothed her with patient care.

"Look at the bower, Marie! See what a nice bed; won't you lie down on it? And what stories you will have to tell mother of our happy time here!"

The child, charmed by the novelty, crept in, and laying down her curly head fell asleep to the crooning of her sister. The stars as they hung over the tree-tops gazed downwards in pity on the little girls clasped in each others' arms in the sleep of innocence, and the soft south wind sighed as it swept by, sorrowing that it could not save them. A murmuring was heard in the pine-tops.

"Must they perish?" asked the guardian angel.

"They must; no help can reach them," answered Nature with a sigh. "Unwittingly they have strayed from the fold into the wilderness, these poor, helpless lambs, and must suffer. Only to man is given the power to help in such extremity."

"Can you do nothing?" pleaded the angel.

"Yes; I shall lighten their last hours, give them

a speedy death, and prevent the tooth of ravenous beast or crawling worm touching their pure bodies. Think me not cruel. I cannot perform the acts allotted to mankind, but am not, therefore, as some deem me, cruel and stolid; my spirit is tender, and what is in my power I'll do."

Sad of countenance the angel turned and glided to the side of the sleeping children. Stooping over them he whispered in their ears, and they smiled in their sleep and dreamt of home, of dancing on their father's knee, of being tossed to the rafters by their brothers, and they felt the touch of their mother's hand and heard the sound of her voice, and they were very happy.

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When they awoke the song of a belated greybird, perched overhead, greeted them, and they lay and listened and watched the movements of a brilliantly colored woodpecker, as it circled the trunk of a spruce. Looking into the face of her sister, Archange saw that it was pale and pinched and that her smile was wan and feeble.

"Will father be here today?"

"I hope so, Marie; are you tired of me?"

"Oh, no; I do love you so, but I do want mother and—and—a drink of warm milk and a piece of bread."

"Well, perhaps you will get them soon, and we will be happy until they come."

They rose and Archange busied herself in setting

forth breakfast, but both, though very hungry, now loathed the sight of nuts. Wandering, hand in hand, to find something more acceptable, they found in a raspberry thicket a bush with a scant crop of second-growth berries. Making a little basket of the bark of the white birch they nearly filled it, and returning to their bower, sat down to enjoy them, fashioning out of reeds make-believe spoons and asking each other if they would have cream and sugar. The play went on and faint laughter was heard. When the last berry was gone, the gnawing hunger re-awoke and the feverish heat of tongue and palate, which the acid juice had allayed, returned. Marie would not be comforted. She wanted to go home; she wanted her mother; she wanted food, and burying her face in her sister's lap sobbed as if her heart would break and she would not be comforted. Archange felt as if she must give way to despair, but she repressed the feeling and bore up bravely. The trials and responsibilities of the past thirty-six hours had aged her, and, child as she was in years, she acted like a woman towards her sister, whom she alternately soothed and tried to divert. While leaning over her, in affected sportive mood, something soft brushed past her face and crept between them. It was a grey squirrel. Marie opened her weeping eyes, looked wonderingly for a moment, and then, with delighted gesture, grasped the little creature, and beaming with joy, pressed it to her lips.

"It is Mignon; my own dear little Mignon! What caused you to run away from me, you naughty boy?"

It was a tame squirrel, Marie's pet, which, a week before, had scampered off to the woods. There was no doubt as to his identity, for beside its evident recognition of Marie, it retained the collar of colored yarn she had braided and tied round his neck. Hunger, home and mother were forgotten in the delight of recovering her pet, for whom she busied herself in getting breakfast, and he was soon sitting before her gravely disposing of the nuts she handed him, one by one.

"Cannot Mignon guide us home?" she suddenly asked.

"Oh, yes; Mignon knows the way; but we would have to follow him over the trees. I am afraid you could not jump from branch to branch; I know I could not."

"Oh, I will tie a string to him and make him walk before us," and with pretty prattle she entered into a conversation with the squirrel, telling him how they were lost and he was to guide them home, for she wanted to take dinner with mother. Mignon gravely listened and nodded his head as if he understood it all. Then he ran up a tree or two by way of exercise, frisked with another squirrel, peeped at Marie from all sorts of unexpected places, and ended his capers by jumping on to her shoulder when she was not expecting him, and pretended he was going to nibble her chin. Marie was delighted;

Mignon had diverted her mind from her sufferings and Archange assisted by suggesting they should make a little house for him. Of sticks and reeds they framed it and plucking from the swamp lap-fuls of ripe cat-tails they lined it with them, making a nest soft as velvet. This done, they had to fill a larder for him, and had a great hunting for all manner of nuts, and in this part of their work Mignon took great interest and pretended to assist, tho', despite all warnings from Marie, he persisted in clasping in his forepaws the biggest butternuts and running away to bury them in out-of-the-way places. When she became tired with her exertions, Marie took a nap and Mignon curled himself up on her breast and snoozed with one eye open.

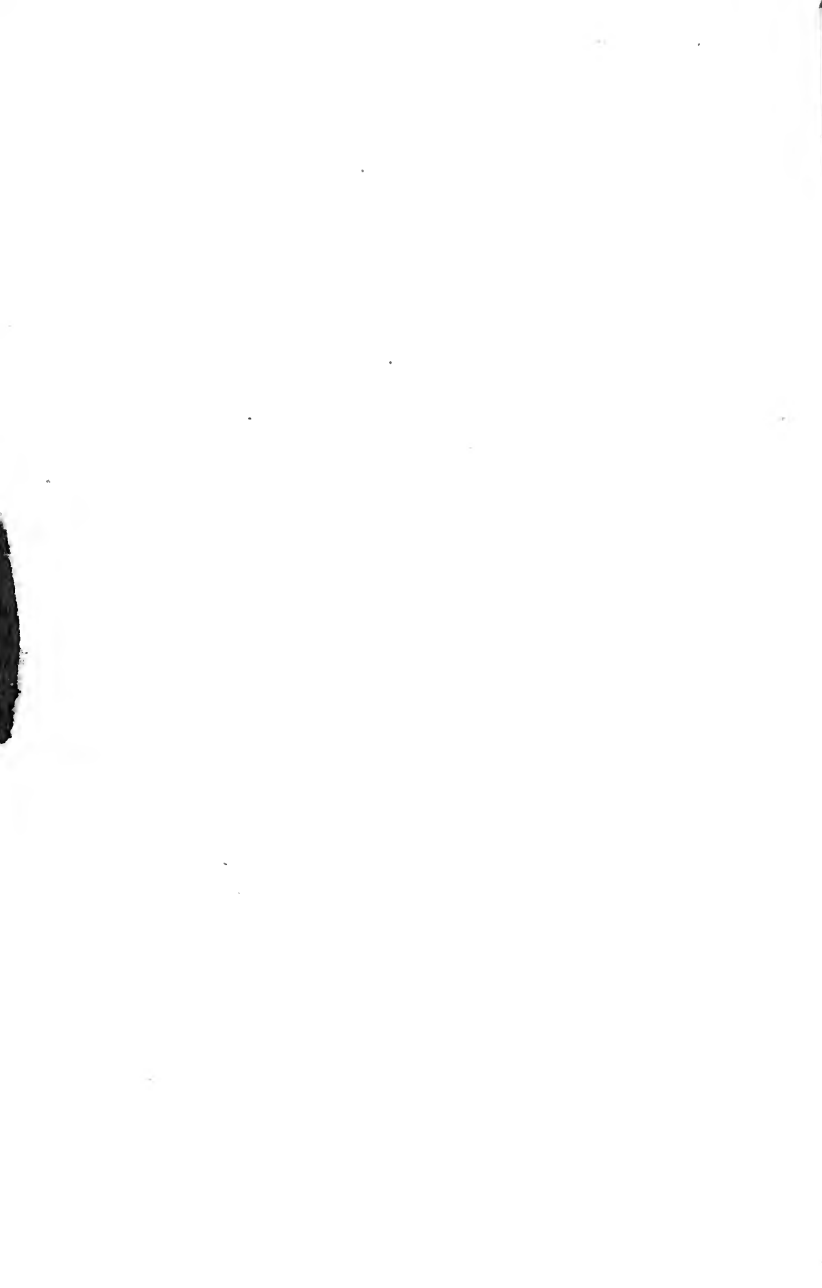
Weak in strength and sick from hunger, Archange, no longer requiring to keep up appearances, flung herself down near by and wept bitterly. Why did not father come? Were they to die there alone and from want of food? Should she not try again to find the way home? She stood up, as if to consider which way to try, when her head grew dizzy and she sank down and knew no more until she was aroused by Marie climbing over her and kissing her. She knew by the sun that it was late in the day, and rising, the sisters walked slowly and unsteadily seeking berries. They found a few only and they again tried to eat nuts. They could not. Tracing the edge of the swamp they looked for blueberries, but their season was past. Suddenly

a low bush, dotted with red berries, caught their sight. They found the berries small and of so peculiar a taste that, had they not been ravenous for food, they could not have eaten them. They picked the bush bare and went to their bower, where they ate them. A feeling of satisfaction followed, and Marie grew quiet and contented.

"Sing to me, Archange: do?" and the little maid laid her down to rest and listen. Her sister sang one after another the chansons her parents had brought with them from Acadia. She ceased and marked the satisfied expression that had overspread Marie's countenance. Her eyes were closed and her hands folded. "Sing the Cedars' song?" she whispered, in the voice of one about to sleep. By that name was meant a hymn Archange had heard at Christmas tide, when for the first time to her knowledge she had been in a church, having accompanied her father to the small village of the Cedars. She knew not the words of the hymn, but had carried away the tune. High and clear rose in the air and floated far away across the desolate swamp the song in which so many generations of believers have expressed their love for the Holy Babe—the ancient Latin hymn, *Adeste Fideles*. She sang the strain over and over again until a strange torpor crept upon her, and her voice grew fainter until it ceased and her head sank beside that of Marie's.

All nature was hushed. The remains of trees, long since burned, now gaunt and white, stood in the swamp as sentinels to guard the sleeping babes, and the giant pines, beneath whose cover they rested, seemed to lift up their hands to Heaven in silent pleading. Slowly yet surely the berries of the dread ground-hemlock did their work; stealthily as juice of mandrake or of poppy. The leaden hours of the long September night passed and inky clouds blotted out the stars, and when the sun rose he shot out a shaft of purplish light, which revealed the faces of the sisters, calm and cold in death, with Mignon whisking his head against the whitened cheek of his sweet mistress.

There was a roll of distant thunder; nearer and nearer it came; it grew darker and the air was hot and stifling. The forest groaned, and then there was an appalling crash and a blaze of lightning clad the scene in dazzling sheen. There was the red glow of fire; the bolt had struck a dead pine and instantly the surrounding trees, covered with withered leaves, that caught like tinder, were in a blaze. The storm shrieked, the thunder made the earth tremble, the rain fell in torrents, but higher and higher mounted the flames. It was the funeral pyre of Archange and Marie, and when it died out not a vestige of them was to be found.



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